METRO / A26
Korina, 17 others file charges vs firm for alleged P500-M fraud

BUSINESS / B1
Imports jump 12.2% to $5.12B in March

WORLD / A28
Film director Sydney Pollack dies of cancer; 73

ACROSS / A20
New schools built by US, RP soldiers await Sulu pupils

GMA orders schools to refund tuition hikes

By Christine O. Avendaño, Jerry E. Esplanada and Jeannette I. Andrade

SAN FERNANDO CITY—REALIZING THAT the enrollment period was over, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday ordered state universities and colleges (SUCs) that charged higher tuition this school year to

GMA ORDERS A13

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Wednesday, May 28, 2008 ★★ 10 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 173 P15 www.inquirer.net

GSIS plan to lie low, spring surprise fails

THE OUTSIDER: Winston Garcia arrives to years in Lopez-controlled territory, the Meralco head office, Ortigas Avenue, Pasig City.

By Dexter L. Lucas

FOR THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURANCE System (GSIS), the plan to wrest control of Meralco from the Lopez family would have looked like snatching victory from the jaws of defeat—had it worked seamlessly.

But the plan, as it turned out, had severe upkeep.

Officials and business personalities close to Winston F. Garcia, GSIS president and general manager, told the Inquirer yesterday that the scheme to spring a "surprise" during Meralco's annual stockholders' meeting was hatched by Garcia himself, and revealed to his "allies" at a meeting on Sunday.

"The Plan" called for the GSIS to lie low and feign weakness in the days leading to the annual meeting, hoping that the Lopez family and its allies would low-

GSIS PLAN A10

AT HOME: Meralco chair Manuel Lopez gets full, generational support from his clan and his extended family of employees.

Lopezes keep Meralco

Garcia vows to pursue ouster bid in courts

By Abigail L. Ho, Dexter L. Lucas and Roonel W. Domingo

WINSTON GARCIA HAD ONE card left, played it and lost. At least for now. Manuel Lopez did not blink and won. At least for now.

At the end of a dramatic, daylong corporate battle yesterday, Lopez remained in control of Manila Electric Co. which he heads as chair.

Garcia, president and general manager of the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), voted during the newly annual meeting of Meralco stockholders to pursue his bid to oust Lopez in court.

Nearly 14 hours after the meeting began, results showed a stunning spec Meralco retained its five seats and the government its four. The two others were independent directors Artemio Panganiban and Vicente Paralkar.

Aside from Lopez, the Meralco directors elected were Meralco president Jesus Francisco, Felipe Alfonso, Chairman Manuel and Cesar Virata.

The government board members elected aside from Garcia were Bernardino Abes, Daisy Ave and Jeremy Paralan. This after Garcia had told the Inquirer last week he feared the Lopez group was gunning to reduce the government seats.

Armed with a "cease-and-desist order" from the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Garcia had sought to stop the counting of proxy votes, accusing the Lopezes of "rigging" the process.

LOPEZES A11

POWER PLAY A composite of six posters declares the many splintered sentiments for and Lopezes and Winston Garcia, GSIS president/GM. And then there are those neither pro nor anti but who focus on what started it all: Cut power rates.

SRO Even the smallest stockholders show up at the Meralco auditorium where the annual stockholders' meeting is held, the longest ever, according to insiders. So crowded is the cavernous hall that cell phone signals jam, and tempers, too.

When smallest to biggest owners become electric

By Roonel W. Domingo, Abigail L. Ho and Dexter L. Lucas

IT SEEMED SO UNLIKE PAST MEETings of the stockholders of the country's biggest power distributor.

Even the smallest owners of Manila Electric Co. (Meralco), who had not attended such meetings before, came. Members of the SWAT, with their guns and their bomb-sniffing dogs, were also around.

And inside the cavernous Meralco Theater itself, where yesterday's annual shareholders gathering was being held, people couldn't seem to get their cell phones to work, causing whispers to float around that signals were perhaps being jammed.

Through it all, one thing was evident: The Lopezes, a family that belongs to the Philippines' old rich and controls Meralco, showed there is a

WHEN SMALLEST A10

Lopezes defy SEC order, say it stops proxies

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lazaro

THE ACE UP WINSTON GARCIA'S sleeve to unseat the Lopez family from Manila Electric Co. was the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

Garcia, head of the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), had the SEC serve a "cease-and-desist order" at Meralco's annual stockholders meeting yesterday.

The order to acting corporate secretary Anthony Rosete was aimed at

LOPEZES A11

Villar cracks whip on senators in ads

By Cynthia D. Balana

BUT LOOK WHO'S TALKING

Senate President Manny Villar yesterday said the chamber should come up with guidelines to police the growing number of its members doing product endorsement for extra income and

VILLAR A6

Celebration, outpouring of love in vigil for 'Ka Bel'

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE VIGIL AND TRIBUTE FOR Antipolo's Rep. Crispin Beltran on Monday night at the Iglesia Filipina Independiente cathedral in Manila was a celebration and outpouring of love.

It was but fitting because the late labor leader and party-list lawmaker was also a very romantic person, according to emcee Renato Reyes, secretary general of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan).

Then, love songs filled the cathedral, including a rendition of Pilita Corrales' "Bow ang Mahal Ko" (the theme song of Beltran and his wife Rosario) by Armida Siguion-Reyna, and of Dan McLean's "And I Love You So" (Beltran's favorite) by Chiloy Pura of The Jeyks.

Siguion-Reyna also praised "Ka Bel" as a man of integrity who did not take advantage of his position, and told the assembly that she was inspired by his life.

Helen Bantolino, Raul Galang and

CELEBRATION A8

9 cops in rubout axed; DOJ chief shoot-to-kill remarks hit

By TJ Burgonio and Alcuin Papa in Manila and Nina Catherine Calleja Inquirer Southern Luzon

POLICE DECISIVELY RELIEVED NINE men over the killing of three civilians in an alleged robbut in Batangas, as the country's top human rights watchdog blamed Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez's "shoot to kill" remarks for their deaths.

"That's what happens if a ranking civilian authority would openly endorse shoot-to-kill policies. These lawenforcers are emboldened so go out of bounds," Commission on Human Rights Chair Leila de Lima told reporters.

"You know who the person is," she added when asked if she was referring to Gonzalez.

The justice secretary made his remarks in reaction to the massacre of 10 people during a robbery at a Cabuyao, Laguna, branch of Rural Commercial Banking Corp. on May 16, and the deaths of eight villagers in a separate gun attack in Calamba a day after.

"I think there should be a shoot-to-kill order against those people already."

9 COPS A4

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

EZ2 SIX DIGIT

19 16 3 7 2 8 3 4

SUERTRES

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6/42 LUZON-VIS-MIN

4 20 23 27 38 40

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Traders 'in no hurry' to join gov't rice tender

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NFA says it's a sign that local supply is stable

PRIVATE GRAINS TRADERS yesterday shunned the opportunity to import duty-free rice, put off by high international prices and competition from government-subsidized sales at home.

Only one trader, Eni-Agro Native Products, sought to import 500 metric tons out of a maximum quota of 1,411,440 MT at the grains section reserving. The tender was meant to encourage more private sector purchases of rice to help boost national supplies at a time of soaring world prices.

The National Food Authority (NFA), the government's grain-importing agency, said this was a strong indication that the domestic supply of rice is stable.

Cornelio Bulan, the NFA assistant secretary who heads the private sector auction committee, said this showed that local demand for rice "may not be as intense as compared to several weeks ago."

The weak response from traders may also be because many of them are waiting for world market prices to soften.

"Maybe they are not in a hurry to buy," said Bulan.

Hit hard

The Philippines, the world's biggest rice importer, has been hit hard by a near tripling of international prices this year. The government sells the staple at a vastly discounted rate to millions of poor Filipinos.

The NFA is trying to persuade neighboring rice-producing nations to sell it grain in government-to-government deals.

Rice prices have shot up this year after exporting countries introduced disparate curbs to check domestic inflation. On Monday Cambodia became the first major Asian exporter to lift its restrictions.

"Prices in the world market will only fall when countries with stocks open their markets," said Bulan.

He said supplies from Cambodia—where rice exports to Thailand and Vietnam are re-exported to other countries—would be expected to "soften" the market.

Also, exporters Thailand and Vietnam will be entering their harvest season next month, and this would also contribute to the softening of rice prices, he said.

Private sector demand, however, is expected to remain muted because of the high cost and the difficulty of trying to compete against cheap NFA rice sold throughout the archipelago.

Importers on Tuesday were allowed to buy up to 75,840 MT from Thailand, 35,000 MT from India, 24,500 MT from China and 15,000 MT from Australia. Only one bid, that of Uni-Agro, for 500 MT of Pakistani broken. That rice was received and will be awarded.

Tariff waived

The usual import tariff of 50 percent was waived but the government imposed a service fee. There was a price cap of $1,200 per metric ton cost and freight but the private importers were meant to settle prices themselves with overseas suppliers.

The NFA yesterday said it may tender for more rice in the international market in December depending on whether local production in the final months of the year was sufficient to preserve a 15-day buffer stock.

"If there will be production from September to December, we can source the 15-day reserve from the domestic market," said Conrad Bulan, the NFA assistant administrator.

The NFA will hold another tender for private traders for 200,000 MT of rice in June. There will be no country quotas in the June tender.

Earlier this month, the NFA scrapped its own a tender to buy 475,000 MT of the grain, saying it wanted to wait until international prices drop. *Beverly C. Antividad and Reuters*

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Corrections

IN THE MAY 13 ISSUE, a front-page article—"GMA pardons 9 Maguindanao rebels as gift to Supreme"—misspelled the name of one of the Maguindanao soldiers who were granted pardon. The soldier's name is Lt. Lt. Cleo Dangga-an—not Dangga.

* * *

IN THE MAY 14 ISSUE, a letter to the editor published on Page A15—"Political hype, not formal resolution"—misspelled the name of the chief of the zoology cluster of Iloilo City Metropolitan Authority. The chief's name is Aranth Esteal—not Estoak.

* * *

IN THE MAY 16 ISSUE, Patricia Evangelista's dubbed Without A Clue column on Page A13 of the Opinion section—"Burma: crossing"—misspelled the name of a fast-growing region in Burma. The place is called the Irrawaddy—not is rawady—Ayeya.

* * *

IN THE MAY 19 ISSUE, two photo captions on Page D5 of the Lifestyle section were mistakenly interchanged. The caption "Lynn Montreal" accompanied the photograph of theater actor Emil Manuel, and vice versa.

* * *

IN THE MAY 21 ISSUE, a front-page photo caption misstated the name of the widow of the late Archdiocese Rep. Crispin Beltran. Her name is Rosario—not Rosa—Beltran.

* * *

IN THE MAY 24 ISSUE, a front-page photo caption misnamed the name of a former secretary of justice. The former justice secretary's name is Hernando—not Fernando—Perez.

* * *

IN THE MAY 25 ISSUE, a front-page article—"Wish come true: Blogger steps on fire with new laptop"—misstated the age of Boet Soalog. His age is 32, not 27. He worked at Schering, not Schering Plough and he joined the USCP in 1998, not 2005.

* * *

IN THE SAME ISSUE, a Second Front-Page article on Page A2—"Govt may sit's ready to protect Lozada"—misspelled the name of the executive secretary of the Association of Major Religious Superiors in the Philippines. The AMRSP executive secretary is Sister Estrella Castalone—not Castalona.

* * *

IN THE SAME ISSUE, a Lifestyle article on Page F1—"Beautiful wedding set in a fabulous mansion"—misspelled the name of the bride's late grandfather. His name is Ricardo—not Amardo—Aranza.

* * *

IN THE CORRECTION of the same article on Page F1, photo captions misspelled the names of two wedding gowns. The gowns are Monchu Bruchaca—not Monchacha—Soriano and Bertie Simpson—not Simpong.

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88 kilos of shabu seized in Subic

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—AT LEAST 88 kilograms of shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride) were found in several computer boxes loaded in a car shipped to the Subic Bay Freeport in Zambales, Pemalera Intl. Anti-Smuggling Group chief Antonio Villar Jr. said yesterday.

The street value of the cargo is estimated at P9 million per kilogram or P864 million, Villar said.

The contraband, loaded in a Mitsubishi Outlander, arrived at 6 p.m. on Monday from Vietnam through a vessel that docked at the Subic Ship Repair Facility.

It was only at past 6 p.m. yesterday that operatives of the PNP and Task Force Subic, the anti-smuggling arm of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority, were allowed to open the car.

The car owner, identified as Ramon Angfael, according to Villar.

Ang, a Chinese-Filipino, is also identified as the general manager of the Hua Long International Inc.

SBMA Administrator Armand Arreza confirmed that Hua Long is a locator at the Freeport and has been doing business there in the past three years. The firm imports cigarettes from China and uses the Freeport as its transshipment point.

"Most probably the contraband was loaded in one of the vessels [used by the consignee] and [then transferred] into the car," said Arreza.

Villar said the shipment could be part of an extension of the operations of the 14-K, a Hong Kong-based illegal drug syndicate.

He said this was the first time that any contraband cargo containing shabu was found at the freeport. Rinerie Oryan, Inquirer Central Luzon

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Highlight

Changing of Palace guard

By Christine O. Avendaño

THERE WILL BE A changing of the Palace guard on June 3.

Presidential Security Group chief Brig. Gen. Romeo Poquiz will go back to military intelligence work but this time as head of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp).

Poquiz, who used to be deputy Isafp chief before he became PSG chief, confirmed his new assignment.

Poquiz will replace Brig. Gen. Ariel Arguiy who will be given a new assignment, reportedly as head of the 605th National Capital Region Command.

The PSG chief declined to say who would replace him as head of President Macapagal-Arroyo's guards.

But talk is rife that those in contention for the post are Col. Carlos Cid, senior presidential military aide, and Brig. Gen. Celedonio Pesquera, head of the 250th Presidential Airlift Wing.

AFP violating rebel soldiers' rights – CHR

By TJ Burgonio

DAN LIPAE

SHOCKED BY REPORTS that detained officers of the 24th Infantry Battalion (IB) were being subjected to "cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment," the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) has asked the military to allow its investigators to visit the 26 officers and 16 enlisted men being held in connection with the July 27, 2007, mutiny at the Oakwood Premier Ayala Center in Makati City.

Citing reports that the officers were being kept in solitary confinement, CHR Chairperson Leila de Lima said the commission would send a team to the Philippine Army's Fort Bonifacio headquarters in Taguig City to check on the conditions of the detainees.

"We have received reports that the officers are being subjected to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. We are sending a team to visit them," De Lima told reporters in a text message.

She said the CHR would also ask the military to allow the officers to receive visitors.

Lt. Col. Antonio Parlade Jr., spokesperson of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), said the military would allow the CHR to visit the officers.

"We have no problem with that. We have nothing to hide," Parlade said.

Parlade said the officers were being kept in the custody of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (ISAFP) at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City.

He said the officers were being treated well and were not being subjected to any kind of torture.

"They are being treated well. They are not being tortured. They are not being subjected to any kind of torture," Parlade said.

Parlade said the officers were being kept in a "safe house" in the ISAFP compound.

He said the officers were being kept in solitary confinement because they were "high-profile detainees."

"They are being kept in solitary confinement because they are high-profile detainees. They are being kept in a safe house," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive visitors, including their lawyers and relatives.

"They are being allowed to receive visitors, including their lawyers and relatives," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to exercise and to watch television.

"They are being allowed to exercise and to watch television," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to read newspapers.

"They are being allowed to read newspapers," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive religious services.

"They are being allowed to receive religious services," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive medical attention.

"They are being allowed to receive medical attention," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive food.

"They are being allowed to receive food," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive clothing.

"They are being allowed to receive clothing," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive money.

"They are being allowed to receive money," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive mail.

"They are being allowed to receive mail," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive packages.

"They are being allowed to receive packages," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive visitors.

"They are being allowed to receive visitors," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive lawyers.

"They are being allowed to receive lawyers," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive relatives.

"They are being allowed to receive relatives," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive friends.

"They are being allowed to receive friends," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive religious leaders.

"They are being allowed to receive religious leaders," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive doctors.

"They are being allowed to receive doctors," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive nurses.

"They are being allowed to receive nurses," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive dentists.

"They are being allowed to receive dentists," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive psychologists.

"They are being allowed to receive psychologists," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive psychiatrists.

"They are being allowed to receive psychiatrists," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive social workers.

"They are being allowed to receive social workers," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive counselors.

"They are being allowed to receive counselors," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive therapists.

"They are being allowed to receive therapists," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive physical therapists.

"They are being allowed to receive physical therapists," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive occupational therapists.

"They are being allowed to receive occupational therapists," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive speech therapists.

"They are being allowed to receive speech therapists," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive audiologists.

"They are being allowed to receive audiologists," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive optometrists.

"They are being allowed to receive optometrists," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive podiatrists.

"They are being allowed to receive podiatrists," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive chiropractors.

"They are being allowed to receive chiropractors," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive acupuncturists.

"They are being allowed to receive acupuncturists," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive massage therapists.

"They are being allowed to receive massage therapists," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive hydrotherapists.

"They are being allowed to receive hydrotherapists," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive aromatherapists.

"They are being allowed to receive aromatherapists," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive reflexologists.

"They are being allowed to receive reflexologists," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive iridologists.

"They are being allowed to receive iridologists," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive naturopaths.

"They are being allowed to receive naturopaths," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive homeopaths.

"They are being allowed to receive homeopaths," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive herbalists.

"They are being allowed to receive herbalists," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive traditional healers.

"They are being allowed to receive traditional healers," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive faith healers.

"They are being allowed to receive faith healers," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive spiritual healers.

"They are being allowed to receive spiritual healers," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive energy healers.

"They are being allowed to receive energy healers," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive crystal healers.

"They are being allowed to receive crystal healers," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive color therapists.

"They are being allowed to receive color therapists," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive sound therapists.

"They are being allowed to receive sound therapists," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive music therapists.

"They are being allowed to receive music therapists," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive art therapists.

"They are being allowed to receive art therapists," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive dance therapists.

"They are being allowed to receive dance therapists," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive drama therapists.

"They are being allowed to receive drama therapists," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive poetry therapists.

"They are being allowed to receive poetry therapists," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive bibliotherapists.

"They are being allowed to receive bibliotherapists," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive journal therapists.

"They are being allowed to receive journal therapists," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive creative therapists.

"They are being allowed to receive creative therapists," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive expressive therapists.

"They are being allowed to receive expressive therapists," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive integrative therapists.

"They are being allowed to receive integrative therapists," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive holistic therapists.

"They are being allowed to receive holistic therapists," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive alternative therapists.

"They are being allowed to receive alternative therapists," Parlade said.

He said the officers were being allowed to receive complementary therapists.

"They are being allowed to receive complementary

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Put 'pork' into farming, Nograles urges solons

By Norman Bordadora

If each congressman of agricultural district contributes P5 million of his or her pork barrel to a capital fund for farmers, this will not only boost food production and lower prices but help save the rural banking industry as well.

Speaker Prospero Nograles yesterday urged House members representing agricultural districts to each set aside P5 million of their pork barrel to provide capital support to rural banks in their areas.

Nograles said he had come to an agreement with Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap and Land Bank of the Philippines to pool the congressman's pork with counterpart funds or three times their amount to be provided by Landbank as seed credit for farmers.

"This is one productive way to use the pork barrel. We put up a minimum of P5 million, Landbank comes up with P15 million to make sure each district is capable of meeting its countryside security requirements and implement a sustained monitoring program," Nograles said.

He said the programs would only be for legislators whose districts include agricultural areas. Small congressmen have P70 million in pork at his disposal a year.

"If, for instance, 200 congressmen will put up P5 million each and Landbank chips in the amount, this means an additional P30 million credit facility for each of the 100 districts, or something like P2 billion in support for rural production," Nograles said.

He said his proposal, which was approved in principle by Yap and Landbank president Gloria E. Pico, would not only boost food security but help rescue the rural banks.

He said that rural banks had been threatened by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas for failing to meet the "capital adequacy ratio" requirement.

Nograles said his proposal was unobjectionable since the farmers would repay their loans to the rural banks after "every [harvest and the cycle goes on."

"We are going to first note the proposal a little bit, and the moment [the lawmakers] express, we will enter into a MOA [memorandum of agreement] with the LBP and DA. But of course, we can't force all congressmen to do it," Nograles said.

He said the lawmakers could increase their contributions and this would still be tripled by Landbank.

"If a congressman sets aside P10 million from his pork barrel, Landbank will give a counterpart fund of P30 million," he said.

At the same time, Nograles reiterated his call for the BSP to rescue the rural banking industry.

He said that if the BSP could release P20 billion now, it could circumvent Planters Bank to ensure the unimpeded functions of the "tough" banking environment.

"It should do the same to the 468 rural banks which could be the government's lead instrument in boosting countryside food production."

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RP pledges relief aid to Burma

By Cynthia D. Balana and Tarra Quismundo

The Philippines has pledged $100,000 (P4.3 million) in cash and medicine ($250,000 (P10.9 million) in kind as assistance to cyclone victims in Myanmar, Sen. Richard Gordon said yesterday.

Gordon said a 30-member Philippine medical team, carrying $50,000 worth of medicines and relief goods in Bangkok [illegible] on Philippine Air Force C-130 plane for the disaster victims in Burma (Myanmar).

The senator headed the six-member Philippine delegation to the International Pledging Conference (IPC) organized by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) and the United Nations in Rangoon on Sunday.

A total of 51 countries and 12 international organizations participated in the conference which generated almost $36 million (P1.5 billion) in cash pledges.

Gordon said the amount was on top of the pledges of some $100 million (P43 million) in bilateral and multilateral contributions that the UN had raised before the IPC.

"With this recent turn of events, it is now up to the Myanmar government to open its doors to the thousands of victims who have now made available various facilities and assistance...to reach the suffering," Gordon said.

The conference was meant to mobilize greater international assistance for Burma in the aftermath of Cyclone "Nargis" that battered coastal and flooded parts of the country on May 2 and 3.

About 128,000 have died, 31,000 have been injured while 95,000 are still missing. Total damages to agriculture, infrastructure, transportation, communication and industrial centers have reached $10.07 billion (P446.3 billion).

Gordon said during the conference, Burma officially announced that it would welcome assistance and aid from any country or organization, provided there would be no strings attached or politics involved.

At the first meeting of the Asean Task Force for the International Coalition for the Victims of Cyclone Nargis, Gordon likewise proposed that the task force tap the expertise, network and goodwill that the Asean Red Cross/Red Crescent societies have already established.

The Philippine delegation and I feel that the international community will provide more money and resources to Myanmar since its government has assured access to all areas in dire need," said Gordon in his statement during the conference.

Strong growth comes from strong roots

abbe

GMA lauds PLDT investment in cyber infrastructure

By Christine O. Avendaño

BAGUIO, LA UNION—THE LATEST cable landing station put up here by Philippine Long Distance Co. will provide a "breather" not only for call centers and the like but more so the national government, President Macapagal-Arroyo said yesterday.

That's because investments like this made by big companies like PLDT spare the government from having to spend heavily on infrastructure and, thus, help it in its goal to have a balanced budget soon, Ms Arroyo said.

"Which forms like PLDT taking on a large part of the burden of building vital infrastructure, there is no need for new taxes," the President said in her speech after the inauguration of the Asian American Gateway (AAG), PLDT's second international cable landing station in Barangay Bacnotan here, with PLDT officers and partners and provincial officials in attendance.

Ms Arroyo said AAG will link the country through over 20,000 kilometers of submarine fiber optic cable to Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei, Thailand, Vietnam and Hong Kong, as well as Taiwan and the continental United States.

"We thank PLDT and its partners in this $ billion dollar cable system: AT&T of the US, Bharti of India, CAT of Thailand, Starhub of Singapore, PT TELKOM of Indonesia, Telstra of Australia, TSI of Malaysia, VNPT of Vietnam and the government of Brunei," she said.

PLDT put up its first cable landing station in Batangas and a third one will be put up in Mindanao soon, the President said.

Ms Arroyo says all projects for the entry of the next speed that would provide "resiliency and redundancy of service that is not easily disrupted by natural disasters like the Taiwan earthquake of December 2006."

"Our current centers and other business process outsourcing enterprises are bursting at the seams," she said.

The President said that when the rumor happened in Taiwan, "everybody said 'you need redundancy' of cyberservice.

"I have also asked PLDT chair Manny Pangilinan about it, he said the company was putting up cable landing stations in Northern Luzon.

"When the private sector puts up an important infrastructure such as this gateway, and opens the gateway means from having to put it up, we are able to balance the budget which remains a very important priority," Ms Arroyo said.

For his part, Pangilinan said that under the Arroyo administration, the telecommunications industry has "actually flourished."

"A liberalized environment has attracted investments in the telecom industry," he said.

The AAG project reportedly cost $350 million, with PLDT contributing $50 million.

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Energy task force revived

SAN FERNANDO, LA UNION—(2/24/2008) Amid the increasing concern over oil prices, President Macapagal-Arroyo has reactivated the presidential task force on energy and has given it two weeks to come up with a contingency plan.

At the same time, Malacañang said the government wants to use the value-added tax on oil to help the people in every administration are seeking the rescission of the tax.

Following a Cabinet meeting here, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the Palace plan was to "give back to the people" the proceeds of the VAT on oil, estimated to amount to P18 billion this year.

Bunye said the President has set for earmarked P4 billion for the people—P2 billion to go to the conditional cash transfer program of the Department of Social Welfare and Development, P1 billion in assistance for the conversion of vehicles into LPG and compressed natural gas (CNG) fuel, and another P1 billion for loans and assistance to schools.

In her remarks at the opening of the Cabinet meeting yesterday, the President said the government "will continue to take actions to reduce the pain in our people of these high prices" of gasoline and "every day commodities that hit our poor the hardest."

"We have our tariffs. We are providing cash payments in the poorest of our poor to help them cope. We will be introducing to Congress a Consumer Bill of Rights to protect our citizens from price gouging, false advertising and other scams that prey on our people," she said.

Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes said the revived energy task force, which was first created in 2002 and will be headed by Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, would come up with a contingency plan of "short-term, medium-term and long-term measures and ensure that it is properly implemented."

Reyes, who is the task force vice chair, said there was an immediate need to provide safety nets to the transport sector, the "most vulnerable sector" to the latest oil price hike.

"There will be pressure for fare increases because of the increasing cost of fuel," he said.

—Christine O. Avendaño

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MAKATI TRINOMA

Celebration, outpouring of love in vigil for 'Ka Bel'

From page A1

leaders of militant groups also sang songs for Beltran. Activists offered garlands of the national flower as some Bikols Ormoc mail: a panic, "Kawalosan ng kamagagalos para kay Ka Bel" by Joel Barrios.

Beltran died on May 20 from severe head injuries resulting from a fall while he was fixing the roof of the family home.

Police honor guard, 8 priests

His remains were brought back to the UN cathedral after a weekend stay in his native Bicol, according to Anakpawis information officer Maureen Hermosisima.

Eight Catholic priests will concelebrate the Mass.

"The House allowed 1,500 people to enter the session hall ... The PNP Band will welcome Ka Bel with honors," Hermosisima said in a text message to the Inquirer.

"No flags, no streamers, no chants will be allowed in the gallery," she added.

The details of the necrological service were taken up at a meeting yesterday afternoon among members of the Anakpawis legislative staff, the Legislative Security Bureau and personnel services, Hermosisima said.

After the service, Beltran's body will be escorted by marchers up to the vicinity of 101 Batasan in Novaliches. From there, a convoy of almost 200 vehicles will accompany the body to its final resting place.

The color red

If the Monday night vigil and tribute was a virtual kwentuhan, it was also a mini-rally that revolved Beltran's passionate struggle to uplift the working class.

Most of the mourners were in red clothing—normally a rare sight at wakes—as though to match the crimson hue top Sagittarius ("his favorite") in which Bel was dressed, and the red flag that draped his coffin.

"It's a sign of passion," Mr. Ian mourning, but we are also canvassing the fight that Ka Bel led against the US-Arroyo regime," said Hermosisima.

The program began and ended with a parade of red flags borne by members of the Pete Quarter Storm movement.

Fiery poems and songs were interspersed with equally ardent messages and speeches by activists, labor leaders and human rights advocates.

"Only Ka Bel's body will rest. His ideals, principles and aspirations for the nation will be continuously raised in the august halls of Congress and primarily in the streets where his legacy as a public servant was shaped," said Anakpawis Rafael Mariano, who will replace Beltran in the House.

A number of speakers assailed the Arroyo administration for its purported sins and shortcomings, including the detention and filing of criminal charges against Beltran, following the latter's issuance of a state of national emergency in February 2006.

Beltran's words and voice were not missed. A video presentation of pictures and clips of the labor leader in action was shown, and a recording of him reading a poem in Filipino garnered the loudest responses of mourners was played.

A simple life

Among those at the packed UN cathedral were Gilles Ambassador to the Philippines Jorge Bey Manalo, Mariculture Center Director Cristina Bagarinao Eleazar, Bayan's Carol Araullo, Karapatan's Cecilia Carranza and Bayan Muna's Nathaniel Santiago.

Beltran's daughter Dhelia said her father practiced what he preached, and lived according to the principles he espoused.

"He lived simply while fighting for the workers. He remained a true and humble person. That is his Bel's legacy to us, his children. We face you with head held high, and we still continue his advocacy," she said.

Rodolfo "Jun" Lumbala, the lineman was witness to its tragedy to the scandal-ridden National Broadband Network deal with China's ZTE Corp. spoke of how Beltran touched his life.

"In medical-nursing graduation rites, pinilit niyang ipaabot sa [to the brief time that I have him, he gave me courage]," Lumbala told the crowd before reading a poem.

Cabanatuan Bishop Benjamin Bilgasi said Beltran continued to live on to the good deeds that he had done for the people and for the country.

Cornie Reginaldo of Migrante thanked "Captain Ka Bel" for working with her group to improve the lot of overseas Filipino workers.

The sentiment of many mourners is that Beltran's manner of death did not in any way diminish how was esteemed as per a poem read by University of the Philippines student Padge Tape, "Sa Pusisa at Mantyin" by Amado Hernandez.

"Whatever is the manner of death, there is a reason to keep determined. A hero serves the people in his very last breath," the poem read in part.

In a taped message from his base in the Netherlands, Sison, the founding chair of the Communist Party of the Philippines, lamented the loss of Beltran and praised his role in the International League of Peoples' struggle.

Members of the CPP and of its armed wing, the New People's Army will fall farewell to Bel from top taking their weapons and human right room today.

"This they will do while observing a minute of solemn silence in salute and honor to Bel," CPP spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal said in a statement sent to the Inquirer text message.

He said this was how the revolutionary movement and its warriors would "pay their highest tribute" to the man.

Rosal described Beltran as "a humble worker, a people's servant and fighter."

"While the working class and the people are saddened at his passing, they celebrate as well the victories Ka Bel helped achieve and all the valuable contributions he made to advancing the [people's] struggle," Rosal said, adding:

'Poverty killed him'

"He devoted his entire life and gave everything to service to the working class, the toiling masses, the Filipino people and all oppressed peoples of the world.

"Poverty killed him. The circumstances of his death underscored further his life of dignity and devotion to the people's causes and struggles." With reports from Norman Bordadora in Manila; Jeffy Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

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9 cops in rubout axed

From page A1

Gonzales had told reporters. "That's my own personal view. I'm really mad about these things, I really don't like what happened. There are unjustified killings."

De Lima made the statement to reporters in the context of a possible CHR inquiry into the killing of three residents of Tanauan City in Batangas during a police operation against possible suspects in the ISAFC savage. She has called the killings "a salvage, an out-and-out summary execution."

A police superintendent and eight other policemen have been ordered relieved in connection with the killings, Philippine National Police Director General Jesus Versoza said in a statement.

The PNP spokesperson, Chief Supt. Nicanor Bartolome, also said Region 4-A (Calabarzon) police had identified nine suspects in the bank robbery. He said police already had the names of the suspects and the plates of the four vehicles.

Restricted to headquarters

Razon said he ordered the administrative relief of Supt. Gilbert Sosas and his team who participated in the alleged encounter in Tanauan.

The nine policemen—eight of whom have ranks below police inspector, were from the Provincial Intelligence Branch and Special Operations Group of the Batangas Provincial Police Office, Bartolome said.

"This will give way to an impartial investigation and make sure that the suspected PNP personnel will not be able to use their positions to influence the outcome of the investigation," Razon said.

Razon, who is attending a conference in Brunei, also directed the Calabarzon police commander, Chief Supt. Eduardo Padilla, to restrict the nine personnel to the regional headquarters to make sure they would be available for investigation.

Possible lapses

Administrative relief means the policemen are taken out of their assignments and prohibited from active duty. Three cases have been filed, Bartolome said the policemen would be placed under preventive suspension, which means they would be taken out of active duty.

The PNP Directorate for Investigation and Detective Management (DIDM) has been ordered to investigate if there were lapses committed in police operational procedures. A special investigation team has been formed under the supervision of DIDM Deputy Director Chief Supt. Rodolfo Mendoza.

Also involved in the probe are the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG), PNP Human Rights Affairs Office (HRAO), Crime Laboratory, and Regional Investigation and Detective Management Division of PRO-4A.

Complete list

The PNP Internal Affairs Service is also conducting an investigation to determine the administrative culpability of the policemen involved in the encounter.

The CHR has asked for the complete list of PNP personnel who figured in alleged rubout encounters in Batangas province and Tanauan, Batangas in May 21 and May 22, respectively. One civilian was killed on May 20 and three others on May 22.

Razon also instructed the PNP under command to give the CHR copies of their after-operations report, including report and terms of the Crime Operations report.

The CHR said three land lawn no shootout as claimed by the police on May 22 when Victorio Aaron Angeles, Melchisedec and Nelly Lachica were killed. De Lima said her office was keen on conducting a full-blown inquiry, possibly a public hearing, into the alleged rubout of the three men.

Death threats

She also said the superiors of the police officers should also be identified under the principle of command responsibility.

Relatives of one of the slain Tanauan civilians have complained of death threats.

Olive Javier, widow of the slain former village chief Javier, said that hooded threatening and defaming her family had been circulating in town. She said the murders were an act of terror.

Sinisiraan ang pamilya ko [They maligned my family] and sinabing pumapatay ako [Threatened me that I was a killer]," said Javier, the mastermind of crimes in Tanauan. We hope your whole family will also perish."

Javier said her family learned of the leaflets through people in town who came to her husband's wake.

According to the people drivers, a man in a car threw the leaflets as the streets.

Senior Supt. David Quintin, Batangas police director, said there is no threat to the Tanauan killings were part of Task Force ISAFC. He said the relieved lineman were conducting surveillance and lost patrol operation when they were fired at.

Villar cracks whip ...

From page A1

less publicity.

Villar warned that the lessen's image would be compromised if the products endorsed by the senators failed to pass health standards.

"This is a matter that should be studied very seriously. We have to be careful. I agree that there should be rules," he said in Filipino.

Villar contended that the Senate ethics committee's rules on senators endorsing commercial products were "not very clear."

"We're not saying it's illegal because the rules are not clear. So it's up to the people to make the final judgment," he said.

Villar himself once endorsed the toothpaster brand Happee. But he pointed out that this happened a long time ago, and that the toothpaste was Philippine-made, not a multinational product. He said part of his advocacy was promoting local products.

Lately, Villar has been appearing in a TV ad, sentiments calling for the protection of the rights and welfare of overseas Filipino workers.

Again he insisted that this was not a product endorsement but a form of public service to help OFWs in need—another advocacy, he said.

According to Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago, senators should exercise self-restraint.

She said it was "certainly unethical" for senators, particularly those seeking higher public office, to do product endorsements this early.

"It's a form of premature campaigning, which is illegal under the election code," Santiago said.

"While senators do no legality, I think it's a step of the spirit of the law. In effect, it's a way of violating the law and at the same time evading criminal punishment. And that's not the example we expect from our national leaders. The solution should be self-restraint," she said.

Sen. Mar Roxas, who once pushed the divergent brand Toka, denied doing any product endorsements. "I don't endorse. I didn't say that the public should buy a product, sure did I hold any product. And I did not say that it was better than the others. It's a public service announcement saying that all product sellers should be true to consumers."

Solons favor scrapping of VAT for lifeline users

THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE will likely pass the bill seeking to exempt from paying the value-added tax (VAT) households consuming 100 kilowatt hours a month, called lifeline users.

Committee chair Antipas Rep. Emigdi Jester said the committee will also restore the VAT exemption of electric cooperatives.

However, it would be difficult to justify exempting from the VAT the electricity distributed by huge power distributors like the Manila Electric Co. and those operated by the Ayala group, he said.

The committee yesterday conducted its first hearing on several House bills proposing to lift the VAT on electricity consumption, including HB 5440, authored by Jester, seeking to exempt lifeline users.

Jester said that unlike Lopez-led Meralco and the Ayala group's Visayan Electric Co. and Davao Light and Power Co., electric cooperatives are not for-profit operations.

"Electric cooperatives are non-profit. They are owned by the consumers.... Whatever they are charged for generation to distribution, they just charge a certain reserve for their administrative expenses and salaries," Jester said.

Isabela Rep. Georgidi Aggabao filed HB 6886 seeking to exempt electricity sales by electric cooperatives from the VAT. The bill also states the exemption to cover the cooperatives' machinery and equipment imports.

But while the proposed exemption for cooperatives would not extend to Meralco and the Ayala-led distributors, Jester said the small consumers of these utilities would still enjoy the VAT exemption and subsidies extended to lifeline users, or those consuming 100 kWh or less.

"I think they will agree to that. The finance department will agree to that," Jester said.

The Jester bill proposes to exempt from the VAT of all sales of electricity to "marginal end-users".

"The VAT exemption shall likewise cover the lifeline subsidy charged to higher income household consumers to relieve non-lifeline rate consumers of the compulsory burden of having to shell out additional expenses for the electricity which they did not consume," it said.

The VAT on electricity generated P307 billion in revenues for the government in 2007, and is expected to generate more than P12 billion this year.

Norman Bordadora

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, May 26, 2010
6th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: 1 PT 1:10-16
Gospel: Mk 10:32-45

Jesus and his disciples were on the road going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead. The Twelve were amazed and those who followed were afraid. Jesus once more took the Twelve aside to tell them what was to happen to him. "You see we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be given over to the chief priests and the teachers of the Law. They will condemn him to death and hand him over to the foreigners who will make fun of him, spit on him, scourge him and finally kill him; but three days later he will rise."

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus and said to him, "Master, we want you to do us what we are going to tell of you," and he said, "What do you want me to do for you?" They answered, "Grant us to sit one on your right and one on your left when you enter your glory."

But Jesus said to them, "You don't know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup that I drink or be baptized in the way I am baptized?" They answered, "We can." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink, and you will be baptized in the way I am baptized. But to sit at my right or at my left is not mine to grant; it has been prepared for others."

On hearing this, the others ten were angry with James and John; Jesus then called them to him and said, "As you know, the so-called rulers of the nations act as tyrants and their great ones exercise power over them. But it shall not be so among you; whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you shall make himself slave of all. Think of the Son of Man who has not come to be served but to serve and to give his life in exchange for many."

Commentary:

Greatness in life comes from greatness of heart; the truly meaning and purpose in life are through self-centeredness but by living for others. Giving of ourselves makes the world valuable as the humble are honorable, for the one who shares generously or rarely shares the full appreciation from others that is deserved.

Our Lord invites us to share the same cup of suffering from which He drank, assuring that we, like Him, will reap that the cup of suffering be taken away. May we open ourselves up to greatness of living by praying with Jesus, 'Not my will but Thine, but Thy will be done.'

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GMA orders schools to refund tuition hikes

From page A1

either refund their students or credit their payment for the next semester.

At a Cabinet meeting in this La Union city, Ms Arroyo also directed the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) to extend the no-tuition-increase period for public and private colleges and universities for one week to give students more time to enroll this school year.

The day before, the President ordered a freeze on tuition increases in 2011, saying any adjustments in school fees were an added burden to most parents in "these hard-tightening times." She also appealed to private schools to freeze their tuition.

This year, many private colleges and universities have already raised their fees by 8-10 percent, according to reports reaching CHED. Private tertiary schools cater to about 70 percent of the college-student nationwide.

Enrollment over

The 170-member Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities (Pacu) said the group could not suspend the tuition increases as the enrollment period for most, if not all, their members schools was over.

"Early this year, no less than President ... Macapagal-Arroyo gave private educators the go-ahead to lift the zero cap on tuition but with the provision that it should be done only after consultations with students and their parents," Pacu president Gonzalo Duque told reporters.

Duque, whose family owns and operates Ateneo Northwestern University in Dagupan City, said "the consultation period between schools and students, as well as their parents, had already been conducted (in February)."

CHED Commissioner Nona Ri-

cafort expressed confidence that the 111 SUCs in the country, which are under the agency, would comply with the directive for a freeze on tuition increases and for those that had raised tuition to refund students or credit their payment for the next semester.

Less than 10% hiked fees

University of Northern Philippines in Vigan City in Ilocos Sur did not raise tuition this school year, Dr. Laura Tadeo, president of the Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges, said.

"Any increase is subject to consultation with parents and approval of the school's Board of Regents," he said.

Only less than 10 percent of SUCs have increased tuition, according to Ricafort, a similar percentage of the 1,800 private colleges and universities have raised theirs, she said.

"In fact, our statistics show the number of private higher education institutions increasing their tuition has gone down every year," Ricafort said.

Compared to last year, the number of private colleges and universities that increased tuition this year was 20 percent lower, according to the CHED official.

'Strongly appeal'

Ricafort said the CHED could only "strongly appeal" to private colleges and universities to put on hold any tuition increase and for those that have already raised higher fees to restore it to students.

"We're positive that some of them will consider but to some who can't really afford ... well, we have to respect them," she said. She said the CHED knew that those schools were also affected by the rising cost of living.

Rather party-list Rep. Mariano Piamonte Jr. saw a dim chance for private colleges and universities to heed the President's appeal. "Private schools are difficult to regulate (in terms of tuition) because they are not subsidized by the government," he said at the weekly Powers at Bantaeño Restaurant in Intramuros, Manila.

Piamonte, a former Catholic Schools Association of the Philippines (CSAP) head, said the tuition increases were usually adjusted to the inflation rate. "The schools know how much they need. Private schools are not many to raise them, schools not of the teacher," he said.

CHED director Joel Pagsanjan said the members of the organization were discussing the President's appeal but were also considering operational costs of running the schools.

In an interview over Church radio Radyo Veritas, Pagsanjan said Catholic educators were not out for profit but also for the pursuit of the evangelical mission.

Gratitude

Students from different state colleges and private universities accepted yesterday as Malacañang's gesture to express gratitude to President Macapagal-Arroyo for the directive to freeze tuition increases although some maintained that the announcement should have come earlier.

At a press conference held in the Palace, some 25 students from privately owned and government-subsidized colleges and universities signed a manifesto thanking the President for her directive to halt tuition increases and for her appeal for restraint among private schools.

They claimed that the directive was proof of the government's concern for education and the youth sector.

Several private school students, however, said the President's directive should have come earlier.

Drop in enrollment

Carlos Escobar University student Ethel Genevieve Bisnero, who was among those present at the press conference yesterday, pointed out that while she appreciated the President's gesture, several private schools had already raised tuition.

Not those students protesting high tuition, Escobar said the CHED was urging them to initiate in SUCs because they were more affordable than private colleges and universities.

The militant League of Filipino Students (LFS) said another round of tuition increases would result in a further drop in enrollment. "Between 2002 and 2007, the enrollment rate dropped at a rate of nearly one percent. We expect this figure to drop further this year," LFS chair Bruce Gleason said. With reports from Jhonson Magallanes, Jaquiter Vinluan and Joelle T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

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Lopezes defy SEC order, say it stops their proxies

From page A1

stopping the inclusion of votes for directors of the Lopez family in the 11-member slate also found.

It sought to restrain Roxas from "recognizing, executing and tabulating or honoring" proxies in favor of Metrobiz chair Manuel Lopez, vice chair Felipe Alfonso, president Jesus Francisco, director Christian Monsod, First Philippine Holdings Corp. (FPHC) president Elpidio Ibañez and FPHC chief finance officer Francisco Gilo-Paras or any officer representing Metrobiz management.

FPHC, the holding company for the Lopez family's interests in toll road operators, power generation and distribution and manufacturing, owns 33.4 percent of Metrobiz.

Null and void

Roxas said the board deleted the SEC order "null and void" since it was signed by only one commissioner, did not have a docket number, was undated and did not bear an original SEC seal.

The SEC order was signed on behalf of the commission en banc by Commissioner Anna Martinez, who is the SEC officer in charge while SEC Chair Fe Barin is attending a securities conference in Paris.

SEC secretary Gemel Galdones said the order was issued in consultation with three members of the commission who constituted a quorum. It was signed by one member of the commission "for the commission en banc."

Quasi-judicial powers

Lakhdar said an opinion available to the SEC was in hold Metrobiz in contempt for defying the SEC order but the commissioner had not issued a new order pending the completion of a report on the minutes of Metrobiz's stockholders' meeting.

He explained that the SEC's action on Metrobiz was not unprecedented and disputed claims by some observers that a cease-and-desist order was normally issued from a regional trial court.

The SEC transferred its quasi-judicial powers, which includes jurisdiction to intervene in intracorporate disputes, to the regular courts in 2000 when the Securities Regulations Code was enacted.

Lakhdar said the SEC had previously exhibited powers for murder complaints. He said that validating proxies fell within its duty as a regulator under the Securities Regulation Code.

GSIS complaint

"There's a fine line between our role in intracorporate disputes which the SEC has transferred to regular courts and this case," Lakhdar said.

"But, in this case, it involves a petition that says there will be an injury on the part of investors and this falls within our power as a regulator of all corporations and not as an adjudicator," he said.

The cease-and-desist order was prompted by a complaint filed in the SEC on Monday morning by GSIS, which said that it owned 20.05 percent of Metrobiz shares and was the designated proxy of four other government agencies, which collectively owned 10.6 percent of Metrobiz's outstanding stock.

That meant that Gsis wanted five more to the seven Metrobiz board. In its current composition, the government has four seats, the Lopezes five and two independents.

In its petition, the GSIS alleged that Roxas usurped the functions of a corporate secretary when he presided over the exhibition of proxies ahead of Metrobiz's stockholders meeting.

The GSIS also claimed there was "massive solicitation of proxies" by Metrobiz management and that Roxas was poised to validate and honor these proxies without complying with the legal requirements for solicitations of proxies.

It said in its petition that the right of the investing public, including its right to an informed and fair election of Metrobiz's board of directors, would be "trampled upon." It said it was not an ordinary investor in Metrobiz since it represented 1.3 million GSIS members.

Hearing on Friday

The SEC issued its cease directive late Monday afternoon and set a hearing on the GSIS petition to invalidate the Metrobiz proxy votes on Friday.

Martinez, in a telephone interview, said SEC Commissioners Ernil Paladeros, Thadeus Brawnmoss and himself were consulted before the order was issued. The fifth member of the commission en banc, Justice Dees, was on medical leave.

The SEC order directed Lopez, Alfonso, Francisco, Monsod, Ibañez and Gilo-Paras from exercising the proxyand shares solicited by the Metrobiz management.

Contested proxies

The order also directed SEC Compliance and Enforcement Department Director Hebert Guevara and two other lawyers in SEC representation to supervise the stockholders meeting with full powers and authority to ensure the holding of a "credible, transparent and peaceful election of directors" in Metrobiz.

Guevara said the SEC did not move to stop the stockholders meeting and the election of new directors but made sure that the contested proxies were not voted, which meant practically all the votes for the Lopez directors.

Guevara said the SEC's order after Elec- also said there was a quorum for the stockholders meeting yesterday.

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Business Can, be simple

MANILA WATER SERVICE UPGRADE IN QUEZON CITY

Manila Water will undertake service improvement projects which will cause temporary water supply interruption in the following portions of Quezon City:

Schedule: 10:00 p.m. Thursday, May 20, 2010 up to 5:00 a.m. Friday, May 30, 2010.

Affected areas:

Quezon City: Barangays Bayanihan, Milagrosa, Tagumpay, Siguin Buhay, Villa Ma. Clara, Masagana and San Roque

Activity: Cut and Plug along P. Tuazon cor. 25th Avenue.

Manila Water Company is advising all residents of the said areas to store enough water to supply their needs during the interruption period.

We want to serve you better.

These service improvement projects are necessary to ensure safe and reliable water supply for our East Zone customers.

For updates, please call our Customer Care Hotline 1627

Manila Water

Pirates seize ship, 5 Pinoys

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NAIROBI— SOMALI pirates have hijacked a Panama-flagged cargo freighter off Somalia as it was sailing to the Romanian port of Constanza, its owner said a Kenyan maritime official said Monday.

"A ship owned by Dutch Hidde Ship-ping was boarded off the coast of Somalia by pirates... The ship was hijacked in international waters in the Gulf of Aden," the owners said in a statement sent to AFP in Nairobi.

"The crew members are from Ukrainian officers and five Filipino seamen. All members of the crew members have been released and have been offered every support available.

"The ship owners stress that its fine and foremost priority is the security of the crew members," the statement added.

The MV Amalya Scan was carrying a hundred-thousand-dollar drilling rig from the Kenyan port city of Mombasa when it was seized.

A Kenyan maritime official told AFP the 33-head freighter left Mombasa on May 16 with its crew on board.

"When the vessel failed to call at one Mombasa, then we knew it had been hijacked because it was sailing through dangerous waters off Somalia, the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea," said Andrew Mwangura of the Kenyan branch of the Seafarers' Assistance Programme.

Mwangura said no ransom demands had been made so far.

Last Friday, Somali pirates released a Jordanian-flagged vessel, MV Hirohita, that had been hijacked a week earlier while carrying 6,200 tonnes of sugar donated by Denmark to war-torn Somalia. AFP

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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS
NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

The Truth about KYUSOKU BIHAKU GLUTATHIONE plus NAC

We know that it was only a matter of time before the L-GLUTATHIONE competition in the market reaches a fever pitch. We also had a smoldering instinct that the competition might turn ugly ONCE THE OTHER BRANDS FEEL THREATENED and will do whatever it takes protect their interest.

It is truly saddening that even a well-respected and esteemed media institution can be easily swayed to unwittingly or otherwise, inconsciously disseminate unreliable and malicious information against competing brands of an ad sponsor all for the measly price of an ad placement. Still, we hold no grudges against this network because this news segment and ad sponsor may have pulled the wool over their eyes.

WE KNEW THAT THIS IS THE PRICE WE'LL PAY FOR BEING TRULY HONEST IN OUR CAMPAIGN.

Bad news for the news segment and ad 'sponsor' is that they might think that they have won the battle but they are gravely mistaken. Little do they know that what they did will prove to be their undoing because people will start talking, will seek for the truth themselves and once they find it, they will know which brands are taking them for a ride all along.

WE STARTED OUT ON A CAMPAIGN OF HONESTY AND BY IT SHALL WE CONTINUE ON.

Our company has been around since 1999 in the glutathione industry, practically starting the glutathione craze in the country. Being first as supplier and product provider. With all these years of experience behind us, we decided to develop the best glutathione formulation and market it at a very competitive price.

Our brand, KYUSOKU BIHAKU L-GLUTATHIONE plus NAC and VITAMIN C BOOSTER+, at KB to longterm and controlled users, has taken over glutathione supplementation to a higher level.

In doing so however, we know that we have also painted a big red target on our backs. We have anticipated that the other brands will play catchup and will try to buy time by spending serious money on smear campaigns. This is until they come up with their own copycat and watered-down versions of our formulation but still of inferior quality and still replete with useless fillers.

THIS MAY BE A LETDOWN FOR THE 'SPONSOR' BUT WE HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR THE START OF THIS SMEAR CAMPAIGN. WHAT TOOK YOU GUYS SO LONG?

We have been waiting for this because we wanted to extend this 'opinion' the honor of paving a wider avenue for us to tell the consumers why our product is way better than them. Thanks for making our job easier for us.

These are some of the facts that we have been honest about:

1.GLUTATHIONE, BE IT REDUCED OR FREE FORM, IS NOT EFFICIENTLY ABSORBED WHEN IT IS TAKEN ORALLY. You only absorb less than half of the supplemental glutathione. This means that you are actually paying for something and getting less than half of the effectiveness. What is even more disappointing probably to the other brands is that some of the latest research shows that the reduced form of glutathione, while ideal via intravenous administration, is more easily destroyed in our gastrointestinal tracts and goes to waste compared to its free form counterpart. This means that users of this form of glutathione may be paying more for something that is even less effective.

2.KB IS PHARMACEUTICAL GRADE GLUTATHIONE.

This means that KB is devoid of the usual fillers like cornstarch for example, found in other brands. We decided to make KB that way owing to the fact pro-vitals mentioned because with fillers, you actually get lesser glutathione. When our pharmaceutical grade formula came about, our brand tried to strike out cornstarch from their labels immediately. They appeared to have done so in a hurry that their printer left out the comma preceding it. They may want to check that one out before pressing their next batch of labels. Furthermore, they may have erased cornstarch from their labels, but it will still very likely remain within their capsules.

3.KB IS THE FIRST AND ONLY DUAL APPROVED BRAND THAT IS FORMULATED WITH NAC. NAC or N-Acetylcysteine is the best glutathione booster available today. Even the famous Dr. Robert Atkins in his book Vita Nutrient Solutions said that, "NAC raises glutathione levels in the body, something that oral supplements of glutathione itself cannot do." We added in NAC in our formulation to make up for the inherent limitations of oral glutathione. Apart from boosting the body's glutathione levels, the NAC in our brand also greatly helps in the absorption and retention of the supplemental glutathione.

KB as a set also comes with Vitamin C Boosters for a very affordable price of Php 1,500.00 only. We have deliberately researched and gave the consumers a quality product that is coupled with affordability. KB passed the tests conducted by the Department of Science and Technology and is duly registered with the Bureau of Food and Drugs. Our brand also recently passed the stringent test by the Office of Muslim Affairs and was declared Halal.

By coming out with the facts stated above, we have undoubtedly earned the ire of the other brands. Instead of tackling and disproving these facts however, the other brands opted to play the game dirty. We can't blame them because the facts that we have presented are the truth and one can't exactly change it. They can only hope to twist it like what they are doing right now.

NOW IS DIRECT ANSWER TO THE 'NEWS SEGMENT' THAT CAME OUT OF A NEWS PROGRAM, WE PRESENT THIS FACT:

The method that was used by this 'respected' testing institution is common. Therefore, their instruments that are also available to a junior scientist toy kit, and to us other scientists, the particular usage of titration according to the online encyclopedia, Wikipedia is to define title, fun, freshness and similar substances.

WHY DO LABS WOULD ANYONE TEST GLUTATHIONE USING A METHOD FOR TESTING FATS AND FISHOIL PUZO?

Any chemist will tell you that for testing amino acid content, the most ideal method would be to use a via High Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC) or Gas Chromatography (GC). We can only make assumptions why the 'respected' institution never used the two ideal and much more reliable methods. Was the news segment and ad 'sponsor' united high to threaten her what did that involve? That maybe the comments in their brand has high-quality oil in it? Or that their brand contains high-end diesel perhaps? We just don't get it.

We urge the people to be more discerning of multi-news reports, documentaries, tv segments and the like because most of them are available for a price. Too bad, this 'sponsor' could have used their money in product improvement to give their consumers what they truly deserve for the hard-earned money these users are spending for their product.

OUR ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN FOR KYUSOKU BIHAKU WAS AND WILL REMAIN FOUNDED ON HONESTY.

Even our model is a certified longtime user of KB. We are not going to waste you into buying our product, sue by and decide you with our underwears and we will definitely not spend millions to sponsor a tv news segment or documentary just to malign a competing brand.

WHAT WE ARE ENCOURAGING YOU TO DO IS TO FIND OUT THE TRUTH FOR YOURSELVES AND FILTER OUT THE LIES THE OTHERS ARE TRYING SO HARD AND SPENDING SO MUCH MONEY ON FOR YOU TO BELIEVE.

Only then will you realize who is telling the truth and you will truly be enlightened.

For inquiries, comments and suggestions log on to www.facebook.com or call the KB hotlines 0917-99-14052, 0917-891-5913 (632) 846-4321, alsoBusiness 0917-869-9969 0917-872-4400, (632) 637-6085

Senate OKs tax break for low wage earners

By Cynthia D. Balana

THE SENATE, VOTING 16-0, LAST NIGHT passed a bill that would exempt minimum wage earners—both government and private sector employees—from having to pay income tax.

Sen. Francis Escudero, wage and women committee chair, told reporters after the vote the measure would result in P5A additional take-home pay for workers, which was better than the P20-and-under salary increases granted recently by the regional wage boards.

The committee rejected the Simplified Net Income Taxation System (SNITS) stipulated in the House of Representatives version of the bill and instead provided a 40-percent Optional Standard Deduction (OSD) not only for the self-employed and professionals but also for corporations.

SNITS directs individuals engaged in trade, business and the practice of a profession to forego a standard 40-percent deduction from their gross income.

The OSD, on the other hand, provides for deductions not exceeding 40 percent for both individuals and corporations but drops the need to itemize expenses. This is meant to offset losses to be incurred once the current tax exemption goes into effect.

Escudero said the measure would give individual taxpayers relief by adjusting their personal and additional exemptions to approximate the rise in inflation since 1997.

The senator said the Senate version of the measure exempted holiday pay, hazard pay, overtime pay as well as night shift differential from income tax. These items are excluded from the House version.

Of the estimated 2.5 million income earners in 2004, some 87 percent were minimum wage earners.

The Senate bill increases the personal exemption for each taxpayer to P50,000 regardless of civil status. The exemption for each dependent up to four was raised to P25,000 from P8,000.

Escudero said revenue losses from the increase in exemption were expected to be about P3.4 billion but this could be offset by the revenues to be generated from the OSD estimated at P15 billion.

Escudero said he was optimistic the reconciled version of the Senate and House bills would be signed into law by President Macapagal-Arroyo before Congress adjourns on June 11.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

State vigilantes

EDITORIAL

THERE'S A REASON WHY IN TV AND THE MOVIES, when policemen pursue criminals and then end up killing them, the cops get upset and lament the killing of the criminals as a failure. Sometimes it's unavoidable, out of self-defense or to protect bystanders, but it's always a failure, because it's ultimately a denial of justice. But then again we are referring to Western shows, reflecting the values of societies that, Filipinos overseas always love to point out, truly understand what the rule of law really means.

We should therefore point out, first of all, that if the public were certain that the police had encountered, and killed, the real culprits in the grisly RCBC Cubayao branch heist, chances are the public would have applauded the cops. This should disturb us. It is the reason why the police can pursue its suspects with the kind of devil-may-care attitude that makes rule-of-law types wholly possible, but probable.

To be sure, the public demands results and has a right to demand the apprehension of the perpetrators of a truly shocking crime. We would even go as far as to say that what our society is trying to come to grips with is an act of terrorism. For we, the people, are the strangers to bank robberies; but we have scarcely seen such murderous mayhem as a consequence of a bank heist.

Instead of results, the public has been given optics: the police top brass venturing the alarming suspicion that the robbery and murders were perpetrated either by cops or military men (alarming, because implicates the public has no idea whether these are informed suspicions or simply an effort to control coverage). Instead of reassurance, the public has been an exhibition of ineffectuary: the President ordering the throwing together of an ad hoc investigating team, a political and not institutional approach to problem-solving. Instead of a calm, thorough investigation, a demonstration of incompetence: crime scene photos leaked to the public and now circulating on the Internet. And instead of cool professionalism, reckless manifestations of brutality: the killing of three "suspects" in a "shoot-out" in Tanauan City that the Commission on Human Rights has already decried as a rubout.

And on top it all off, PNP Chief Avelino Razon Jr. can truly say that he never gave shoot-to-kill orders, which tells us that his authority doesn't extend any further than his desk, or that the men and women under his command are less impressed by his authorities than they are by Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez's bloodthirsty it's-fine-to-shoot-to-kill statements. After all, even if the CHR brings cops to court, they can count on the DOJ.

Lawyer Marichu Lualdato points to the reasons why the PNP's attempts to forestall bad headlines by producing results by hook or crook entirely misses the point.

"What does it serve the rights of victims," she asks, "if we cannot get the masterminds, accomplices and accessories such as those who gave the RCBC robbery information on the amount of money in the bank; those who gave them information on the limited security measures and the limited alibis system; those who gave them information on the number of security guards, their weapons, number of employees on the locks, etc. Those who conducted surveillance and acted as lookouts. Those who provided them with cars, high-powered firearms, safe houses, communications facilities, food, logistics. Those who hid the money and laundered/will launder it."

What, indeed? Which is why we believe it's fair to say this crime has the characteristics of terrorism. It has thrown the vulnerability of civilian life, the extreme limitations of the authorities when it comes to law, order and justice, it has shaken our society because the question of why the crime was so gory has only been answered by the authorities by ignoring the question altogether, and producing more gore.

The entire approach of our authorities has been that of the vigilante: to focus a pious and cauldron justice with big stalking steppers without so much as a kangaroo court.

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Amend Epira to lower electric rates

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

IN A SENSE OUR HIGH ELECTRIC RATES ARE the result of lawyers and accountants in the employ of Meralco and the Lopez family. Meralco and outside have learned to use the law to defeat laws conceived to break their hold on them. When a bill is introduced in Congress that would improve the electric rates, they immediately launch a lobby to defeat or delay passage of the bill. When passage of the bill seems inevitable because of strong public and legislative opinion, they resort to delay: they devote the lobby to punch loopholes in the bill so as to insert in those useless provisions even more than they had.

The lawyers fashion the amendments, interpret, new provisions and the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) to defeat the original purpose of the bill. That was what happened with the Oil Deregulation Law, the Epira (Electric Power Industry Reform Act) and the Cheaper Medicines bill.

The intent of all these bills was to break up the cartels and promote competition to force prices down. Government removed price controls thinking that market forces will keep prices in check. But what happened? Fuel prices and electric rates went through the roof. We have witnessed how oil companies raised their prices every week and how power distributors passed on to their customers all these expenses and taxes, including their own electric consumption and income taxes. The latter is not allowable as an expense.

How did they do it? In the oil industry, domestically, the Big Three, the oldest one to open up the domestic market to many players to promote competition. The two did open up the market to many players—but very small ones who cannot compete meaningfully with the Big Three. In fact, the new players ended up buying their supplies from the Big Three and retailing them and then following the price of the three giants.

Also, it is a fact that setting up a new oil refinery or taking over one of the Big Three is capital and that you have to get a new entrant an enough time to establish itself to be able to realize a reasonable return on its investment. Besides, it is unlikely that

GSIS steamroller hits wall

ANALYSIS

Armando Doronila

THE BELLIGERENT ASSAULT OF GOVERNMENT to seize control of libraries from the Lopez economic interests appeared to have collapsed on Tuesday on the eve of the annual libraries stockholders' meeting at its space level. The Government Service Insurance System, conceded it had failed to muster sufficient proxies to win the majority in the 11-member libraries board.

GSIS executives threw in the towel even before the libraries could place ousters in the stockholders' meeting in the Manila Pavilion. The assault fizzled in a torrent of blasts and threats of **mass takeover of private enterprise as a solution to bring down the widely condemned and "crushing" Manila electricity rates.**

The opening was to have been the deciding moment of the fundamental question whether or not a relentless state could crush the political and economic power of the Lopez family which has controlled libraries since 1961 and the more spectacular ABS-CBN broadcasting network, which it accumulated a foothold in the oligopoly power with its inclusion in the life blood of the country's information and broadcasting.

The government's offensive translated on the libraries board was one of the mechanisms enabling the party voter needed to increase the government's four seats in the libraries board, in the Lopezes' favor, to win control of the management.

As early as last Sunday, Winston Garcia, GSIS president and general manager, flagged that the executive had flagged control. The offensive had the blessings of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, who said it as a two-edged weapon in bring down electricity rates as well as to settle political scores with the Lopez family for a number of issues, including the wiretapping scandals between her administration and the Lopezes' ABS-CBN radio-TV media network, the largest in the country, and the haunting memory that her father, President Diosdado Macapagal, failed to get libraries back through the House all the more powerful as his command at times.

President Arroyo used Garcia as her battering ram, but it turned out that, by his own admission, Garcia was not a General Rento Gubonia, the German commander who led Hitler's blitzkrieg on France in World War II. Garcia proved to be more bluster than fact. On Sunday, Garcia told the press he had received information that the Lopezes had planned to use allegedly illegal proxies to block the takeover—a charge the Lopezes denied. "Their activity doesn't make me very optimistic," Garcia told the press. "I'm afraid that they are going to all the dirty tricks to subvert the true will of the stockholders." So was breaking down the door of a conference, he then shifted the line of attack by demanding press and TV coverage of the stockholders' meeting on the grounds of transparency. The Lopezes blocked this.

Garcia was trying to convert the meeting into a forum as a public opinion lesson, were though he knew fully well that if the proxies had been rigged, the firing would have been done behind the glare of TV cameras. Garcia was reversing the direction to be a battle for the public opinion, which he assumed was on his side, but he himself had thrown at the Lopezes weeks ahead of the showdown.

Last week, Garcia said that in the battle for power votes, he feared he might lose his seat in the Monday board. That would please his job as GSIS head on the line.

Garcia was all bluff last week. He dangled the bait that the Lopezes and their representatives may be of the helm of Meralco management, even if the power generator is controlled by the libraries, which may suddenly be said by his vice-chair Fe-lix Garduche, Meralco director, as Meralco CEO to replace Manuel Lopez as chief executive, and even Mr. Lopez, one of current Lopez generals Oscar Lopez, to replace his uncle as top Meralco executive, found with increasing signs of unpacking the libraries stockholders' meeting, Garcia continued to plan his last-ditch attempt to win control of libraries by using condemning as offering concessions to the Lopezes.

Last Monday, May 26, Hamparan, the business GSIS legal counsel and spokesperson, issued statements that the refusal Lopez's proxies invalidated the of a successful Meralco takeover. He told reporters that the Lopezes would most likely retain control of Meralco. "We don't have any illusions that we could wrest control," she said.

Garcia said he didn't hoped that it would at least to take its four seats in the Meralco board. The refusal claims of Garcia that the GSIS had failed to gain access cited security that would have allowed GSIS to question proceedings at yesterday's stockholders' meeting. Lopez was the acquiescence and the ordeal of the GSIS of the past few months that they had. The power and the economic resources to buy out the Lopezes from libraries or muscle them out with threats of confirmatory actions of private assets.

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'Sayasaya'

MENTION THE AYALA MUSEUM AND PEOPLE TEND TO think of the diorama depicting the history of the Philippines, with occasional temporary exhibits, usually of art work.

The past year, the museum has been going through a major make over, setting up new long term exhibits that are awesome—and I'm not using the word lightly. Last year they put up an exhibit of textiles and costumes found in boat or archaeological sites. I described that exhibit as an infinite had you, and I will say this: you won't be disappointed. Philippine clothing from the 10th century and the other of 1050 gold objects, again excavated locally. Together with the trade ceramics, these two new exhibits were formally opened on May 1 with the name "Crossroads of Civilizations."

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

It's no misnomer as name because the exhibits tell us about how the Philippines was and continues to be shaped by globalization many centuries ago in terms of what we wear and what we had in our homes. The trade ceramics, for example, tell us that our ancestors already had an appetite for imported items echoing many years ago. That exhibit hints, too, at the relationships we had with our neighbors, notably China, Thailand and Vietnam, our trade partners whose influence can clearly be drawn was flourishing trade, our neighbors coming in for local products. With trade comes cultural exchange, traces of which remains today in our languages, food, clothing. It was never a one-way exchange—among the trade ceramics, for example, are pieces the shape of the Batanes hat, a local item.

I'll save the gold exhibits for my Friday column and focus today on the textiles. They are still mesmerizing exhibit, "Fashioned Identities: 18th-19th Century Philippine Costumes." The exhibit takes up only one corridor but you shouldn't miss it because it shows actual samples of old clothing which have never been shown before. Until this exhibit, all we had were illustrations, notably in watercolor prints by the 19th century painter Damian Domingo. The Domingo prints can be admired at Ayala earlier, almost like an appetizer, and have been reprinted by Ayala Museum in a book, "Multiple Originals, Original Multiples" by Florina Capistrano-Baker.

It was Capistrano-Baker who stumbled on a collection of Filipino clothing while doing research at the London National Museum of Ethnography. That led to an exhibition was an unusually able to arrange for the materials to be loaned to the Ayala Museum for the next five years, complemented by additional clothing from the private collection of Rina Cruz.

What you'll find here are blouses, handkerchiefs, pañuelos (a must worn on the shoulder), skirts, tapa (wrap-around skirts) and other pieces of Philippine costume. There are not our usual holiday designs, where every inch of empty space is filled with some design. Instead, you have the embroidery along borders or corners. From afar, they call attention by accenting the clothing. Up close, you realize how intricate the embroidery is. There are materials that offer potential design ideas for today's fashion designers and students to mix as well as the fashionistas trying to transcend fashion.

Fashioned identities

Make sure to watch a video presentation, "Fashioning Identities," which sets the context for the exhibit. First, we learn how these clothing items came to Ayala. The Ayalas amassed their collection in Europe, in the 19th century. Beyond, who had been assigned to Manila from 1881 to 1886. **The small collection was not given too much attention because the interest, at that time (and perhaps even today), was in the so-called "pure" tribes.**

Even the word "costumes" carries some of this bias. Cora Alonzo, a Filipina who graduated in history, pointed out in a recent lecture at the University of the Philippines that the word "costume" should be discouraged because of the way it misleads people. How come we refer to the barong Tagalog as a national "costume" but never call a coat and tie a "western costume"?

The Ayalas were looking for something different, something exotic. The clothing from the Philippines that ended up in London showed "hybrid" culture. It was too Filipino too European, and therefore damned.

I've noted this disdain for the familiar even in historical accounts. The German Fedor Jagor visiting the Philippines in the 19th century noted, with dismay, that the folks seemed to imitate everything from Europe, including hats.

This was not true of course. What the visitors failed to see was the way we would "borrow" something from other cultures, and then indigenize or localize it. This was clearly happening with the clothing. While aspects of European ballroom did seep in, we would modify the designs, and use local materials to achieve observant. Jusephrinos, for example, marveled at the way we created Filipino frills.

"Embroidered Multiples" shows actual samples of clothing made from those fine materials but make sure, too, not to miss two other examples of local adaptation. Look for two hats in a glass case which, unfortunately, are a bit dark because the museum lighting is not bright enough. One is a top hat. The top is a salakot, and any ordinary salakot but one made from carabao horn and abaca. The other item is a top hat which you'll possess is made, European-style, from horse hair. But look more **closely and you'll realize it's woven as one does a basket, but shaped into what and painted black.**

On Thursday, I will discuss and think of the people who wore them. Not eye see from the clothing, they were much shorter and smaller than the average Filipino today. **The men were certainly dandies, with a love for embroidered** design. This is best reflected by the sayasaya or embroidered silk trousers imported from China. The saya-or exhibit are the only known surviving items of this type from the 19th century.

Think, too, of the way the clothing might have been, and the roles this suggests. Sabrina Alcorcon Ramundo also noted the late 19th century "Filipina" was a term reserved for Spaniards born in the Philippines. A nationalist movement was germinating, and our forebears may have helped to "Filipinize" ourselves. The hybrid fashions tell us something about an emerging Filipino bourgeoisie that came from the indio or the "native," but who also wanted to display their living bourgeoisie. It was as typically Bismarck, assumed by the women, the European, but was also conscious of the local. From the choice of fabrics, to the type of embroidery used. Try to look at the clothing, and the people who wore them, body language—that came with wearing Philippine clothing.

Visit ayalamuseum.com for exhibit details and museum hours.

School of the future

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

THE OPENING OF THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR IN this country coincides with the onset of the rainy season, highlighting own problems that confront us year after year.

The first is the seemingly perennial lack of classrooms and school buildings, with the hapless hard-pressed each time school opening season comes around to build enough classrooms for the ever increasing population of students. Add to this the need to repair, if not rebuild entirely, school buildings damaged in typhoons and other natural disasters or simply falling apart due to use and substandard construction.

Around this time of the year, too, the Philippines prepares to face the onset of other typhoons, floods, landslides and other disasters. And for many communities, especially in the rural areas, the nearest and most convenient evacuation center is the local school building, which explains why half of storages, another materials than their own flimsy houses. But what if this and the same? What if the school house itself is vulnerable to the elements?

* * *

RIAM Brat, 34, is a "social entrepreneur" who has gained recognition here and abroad for his innovative ideas on community building and environmental protection. He is also the executive director of My Shelter Foundation, devoted to the popularization of "sustainable and replicable" structures that are adapted to local conditions, affordable for communities and responsive to the needs of living the environment, energies and interest of the people they are to shelter. I first heard of him when My Shelter launched its "Bahay Kubo" project, which was a P1-million grant to replicate a pilot school house constructed from jute bags filled with earth and plastered over with cement, and distinguished by its dismal, "cyclone-like" profile.

Brat later expanded the basic concept and with different partners embarked on an international search for the best, most affordable and most practical design for a school house that can withstand local weather conditions—heat, wind and rain—while providing an environment conducive to learning and enhancing disaster recovery.

"In many areas, our people become casualties when they reach the local school," Brat says, flashing on his laptop photos of school buildings reduced to rubble in enemy territories. **The traditional design of a public school, he explains, has been shown to be vulnerable to disasters, particularly to high winds** and floods. "With global warming, experts predict that there will be an escalation in the strength and impact of typhoons, and so we need to look out of the mold and look for designs of school buildings that are not only typhoon-proof and earthquake-proof, but also environment-friendly and affordable."

Last year, My Shelter Foundation launched the "Re-Imbre Build Better" program, starting with the Millennium School Competition, which drew some 600 entries from architects around the world which were evaluated and judged by an international panel.

Project partners were the Philippine Green Building Council (PHILGBC), the National Disaster Coordinating Council, the Earthquake Impact Assessment Team of the Philippines, the Private Sector Disaster Management Network, Inc., Habitat for Humanity and the Department of Education.

Providing financing support for logistics, preparations, prize money and for the construction of the pilot building from the winning design are sponsors Holcim (Cemex), DHL, GFA-CDN Foundation, Rotary International and the Manila Bayers.

* * *

ELECTED indeed are the winning designs which are currently on display at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, where Brat is currently completing his Masters in Public Administration.

First prize winner is a Malaysian architect who thought up of a school building fashioned from a concrete shell with bamboo walls, floors and pillars. "Do you know that bamboo is more times than the strength and other materials commonly used locally?" asks Brat. The only is the building designed to "sway" with the wind, with the sloped roof designed to lift rain water, also relies on a renewable building material. In fact, says Brat, the community would even plant a grove of it in the area, with a bamboo grove they could sustain to provide the replacement materials.

Other winning designs are just as interesting and "local." The Filipino entry, for instance, incorporates historical Ifuao motifs in building the school gardens. Another promotes the cost build, ing from the elements with a shell of metal lattices, which would close up "like an armadillo," for protection from the elements, typhoons, earthquakes with a rig, rig profile, meant to "break up" wind forces.

All the winners and runners-up stalls natural materials, such as using adobe as much as possible, and have received funding and handson assistance for construction and education.

Certainly, the winning designs are a far cry from the traditional square and space concrete structures we are used to seeing. The challenge for the next pair doped toolbars and profiles that harken to traditional Asian designs, the "new" schools are in fact attractive, and even playful.

* * *

"I JUST hope the Depêd and other officials aren't so invested in a school house template that they cannot entertain new ideas," says Brat. I'm not sure that Depêd has agreed to have the winning designs constructed in Camarines Sur under the Ahlpo-a School program which, as promotional materials claim, "may be the cheapest but sustainable way how school buildings should be built in a developing country."

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Mexico, under our skin

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

"BAHAY KUBO" IS A NURSERY RHYME THAT Filipinos sang into their old age. Passed on from generation to generation nobody takes the trouble to think about the lyrics. The title is the first line the first line of the song that has nothing to do with a nipa hut. "Bahay Kubo" is actually a song about vegetables that grow around the hut. Singkamas, sitaw, sigarilyas, munti, sitaw, luya and patani are all common Filipino vegetable that are grown in the backyard. Many of us were surprised to learn that many of the plants, fruits and vegetables they grew up with were imported centuries ago. Many of the "native" plants we grow were vegetable and fruit immigrants from Mexico. Both examples are historic accidents, not by design. The galleon trade, which linked Manila to Acapulco that and sent "it" originated from Mexico. On the other hand, through the galleon trade, the Philippines gave Mexico mangoes that are now known there as Mangos de Manila. Global tourism may sound like a new word or concept but it is as old as the galleons.

Look back at the exchange between East and West during the galleon trade and you will see globalization at work on by-in-on-history like. no one not figure in our history like Spain, the United States of America, or Japan but the cultural exchange is one-sided.

Taking a shortcut and avoiding the trouble of undertaking research in our archives, museums and libraries, the Mexican Embassy in Manila was smart enough to send a query regarding direct names, landmarks and institutions in the Philippines related to Mexico to our Department of Foreign Affairs.

Their letter, following diplomatic channels, was translated to the National Historical Institute that did research that yielded surprising results. Naturally, the place to start is the province of Pampanga. But a feature for its version of tamales and a wealth are more called Mexico. Though similar in look and taste, the Kapampangan tamale is a rice cake with meat wrapped in banana leaves; it is said to be of pre-Spanish origin and only loosely related to the Mexican food that is made of cornmeal and is wrapped in corn husks.

There are many versions about how Mexico, Pampanga got its name. Local lore states that the town got its name from Guachinango who settled there from Mexico during Spanish times. Another story is that the founders of the town—Spanish friars, military and civil officials—had served in Mexico and finding some physical similarities between the two gave it its present name.

The problem is that there are nine Kapampangan-to-our pronounced Mexico as written but "empanamean" is as "mexico." According to Hugo de Bruijnes, who compiled one of the earliest Kapampangan dictionaries and grammars, the only Web correct "mexico" is an archaic verb that means "abundance." Could Mexico be the pre-colonial name of the town that we, Pampanga into Mexico? Well, the Libro de Gobierno of the Augustinian order states that the town was first called Mexico and was known as Nueva Mexico or New Mexico.

New Mexico in the United States has a town called Santa Fe; well, there is a Santa Fe street in Manila. Manila that is named after the original Santa Fe in Mexico. There there is a town in Bulacan. Is that connected to Mexico? No. One will rather Lanson travel to Lumpaloc called A. Mendoza, a rather common name in the Philippines that leads residents to ask who is the historic Filipino honored by that street. The street was named after Antonio de Mendoza, first viceroy of Mexico (1535). Finally, there is a municipality in Northern Samar called Capul that is not named after anyone or anything local; rather, Capul is from Acapulco, Mexico.

There are three monuments or historical markers in the Philippines area that are related to Mexico, somewhere by the Pasig river, on the Ayala estate in the Bureau of Immigration, in a monument to the galleon trade. On the other side of the walled city, along Intramuros drive, there is a small memorial to Mexican Air Squadron 201.—Mexi. Pilots who served in the Philippines during World War II.

Close to this is the statue of Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla (1753-1811), the National Hero of Mexico whose cry for independence is often best among Filipinos who do not know him.

Last summer in the Manila we have an old and new Guadalupe—Guadalupe Viejo and Guadalupe Nuevo—churches that trace the origin of their patronage to Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe or Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico. This image is a symbol of Mexico and the mother of the Mexican people. The Guadalupe image was most revered Catholic church next to St. Peter's in Rome. In 1810, Pope Pius II made Our Lady of Guadalupe Patroness of the Philippines.

Finally, some words in our languages that we presume are Spanish like pulpo for eyeglasses and cangkoy for watches are actually Mexican. Mexicans use lentes for eyeglasses instead of pulpo for eyeglasses. Spaniards use orologio instead of cangkoy for watches. It seems that when you scratch the modern Filipino in an attempt to uncover the various cultures that make him what he is, Mexico will be found under his skin.

* * *

Comments or advice at ambeth@yahoo.com

We can't trust gov't with population funds

LETTERS

AMID FEARS OF A RICE SHORTage, it is inevitable that attention should turn once again to population control/family planning. After all, the reasoning goes, with fewer mouths to feed, there would be more food to go by for everyone. And, not surprisingly, the Catholic Church gets the blame for spoiling government efforts to promote modern contraceptive methods.

Excuse me, but now that we have dragged the Church into the fray, the government suddenly becomes trustworthy and competent enough to manage a multi-million-dollar population control program?

Modern contraceptive methods, which must be invented, tested and paid for, cost real money. No wonder then, that a recent UN study shows that the country needs about $2 million a year from 2005 to 2015 to provide contraceptives for free or at subsidized prices to the poor.

This huge amount of money in the hands of the government is the same government that wasted P728 million of fertilizer funds? The same government whose job it is to make sure there is adequate rice on the table of Filipinos, or else get sued? Why this sudden trust in the government? Is it because the $2 million per year (a total of $30 million in four years) is so small an amount compared to the $329 million the government wanted to spend on a "loaned" national broadband project?

We can argue all day long on the morality of modern contraceptives, but to propose that government handle the program and its funds is just about as wise as asking the wolves to guard sheep.

—DOMINIQUE CERRADO B. CHAMORRO,
dominique.chamorro@ymail.com

High fees bleeding litigants dry, ground for impeaching SC justices

RULE 1: THE SUPREME COURT IS always right. Rule 2: If the Supreme Court is wrong, apply Rule 1.

Right or wrong, the decisions of the Supreme Court form part of the law of the land from which there is no more appeal.

The Supreme Court has promulgated rules raising the costs of filing cases to astronomical heights, so that only the rich can now afford the luxury of seeking judicial redress of grievances. The Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) challenged these rules as repugnant to the Constitution which declares that "access to the courts shall not be denied by reason of poverty," among other grounds.

But for some mysterious reason, the SC withdrew that challenge. Rumors had it that the IBP lost its balls when some influential magistrates intervened and moved quickly to save the Supreme Court from being put on the spot. Everybody agreed as to how far what the Supreme Court did was wrong, but it was seen as the only way to increase the salaries of the magistrates and their personnel in the face of budgetary constraints.

Thus, as incongruous as these rules are with the constitutional mandate, they were stand as valid and binding—and blinding all litigants dry. I submit that if there was ever a more egregious ground for impeaching Supreme Court justices for "culpable violation of the Constitution," this should be it.

—STEVE T. VERMEA, Esq.,
steveddd@yahoo.com

Chilling effect of Lozada's experience

THE DISSENTING OPINION OF Chief Justice Reynato Puno in the case of Neri vs Senate Committee on Accountability is a reminder of good government. It is not that Puno or al were unmoved by the pro-Neri petition.

But what saddens me the most is that despite unanimous letters to the Chief Justice and the court administrator, no concrete action has been taken on my complaint for misconduct against a Supreme Court employee, a complaint for harassment, against a lower court employee, and on the question which I repeatedly raised: Does the so-called "Supreme Court Decision Procedures" dated June 9, 2006, threatening my person, exist? Is it real?

What should worry us all is the largest possibility of government officials, despite dwindling approving official misdeeds for fear of finding themselves in the same boat as Jun Lozada.

—JOSE B. FLORES,
Boyhood Triad Court,
Barrack 126 Caloocan City

Food crisis fault of RP's agriculture officials

THIS IS IN REACTION TO THE LETTER OF Quirino Mangalino, president of the Gumaca Union of the Philippine (UNP) regarding the rising prices of basic commodities (06/06/08, 3/22/08).

Based on the UN report, it is clear that the country's dreadful food supply situation—from the recent rice shortage to the current runaway prices of vegetables—is the sinking of our very own food managers, particularly the administrators of the Department of Agriculture. Had the DA taken measures to prevent the current food crisis, wage earners would not have demanded salary increases in the first place, and the production of the Employers' Confederation of the Philippines could never layoff workers would have had no basis. Any economist worth his or her salt knows that when food prices are sufficient at reasonable and of definable prices, there is no discontent among workers and the general public. The claims for a wage hike or, for that matter, the betterment of one's life commence from an empty stomach.

Mr. Aglam, whether done intentionally or not, has inflicted a gross injury on the public. While millions of Filipinos continue to suffer the brunt of high prices of basic commodities, a few lucky ones are enjoying a bonanza. This continuing inefficiency of the DA in managing the country's food supply alone proliferating and even manipulation.

Despite the gravity of the DA's negligence to the point of an unforgivable public injury, I wonder why no class suit was ever filed against the country's food managers by consumer groups, particularly CUP. I also wonder why despite the manifestly gross negligence on the part of the agriculture secretary and the director of the Bureau of Plant Industry, they have not been held accountable and even sacked.

Finally, I'm wondering, whatever happened to the investigation into the relationship of the agriculture secretary to the food cartel that monopolizes the prices of basic commodities. Digong, Jess, Aquilino Pimentel Jr.

—JENNIFER SANTOS,
jenn11774@yahoo.com.ph

Across the NATION

PNP dealing 'wrongly' with Panlilio request for police chief

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

SEN. BENIGNO AQUINO III, CHAIR OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE on local government, says irregularities in the way the Philippine National Police processed the request of Pampanga Gov. Eddie Panlilio for a provincial police director.

"It is clear that a difference thing happened in the request of Governor Panlilio. The reasons that the PNP gave are difficult to believe but we are trying to understand that they are loyal soldiers," Aquino told reporters in Pilipino after the hearing on Tuesday.

He said the ideal process was to choose nominees from a pool of eligible officers.

"What happened here is that in the first list of three nominees, two nominees were withdrawn and replaced by two new nominees. There was an order to reinstate the first list but this one was transmitted," he said.

Panlilio, in the hearing, said the first list was prepared by the National Police Commission through Resolution 339 on Aug. 29, 2007. It contained the names of Senior Superintendents Abner Binadoy, Cesar Fuentebuena Hang and Keith Singian, the acting Pampanga police director.

Hidden list

He said this list had "not been transmitted and hidden" from him by Chief Supt. Errol Nera, General Luzon police director.

Director General Avelino Razon Jr., PNP chief, later asked Napoleon to withdraw the name of Hang, Panlilio's choice, owing to his being the deputy of the PNP's transformation program.

"The idea of Governor Panlilio will be almost one year but he has not yet exercised his right to choose his own provincial police director," Aquino said.

Sen. Francis Escudero, the committee's vice chair, said the removal of Panlilio's choice in this first list was wrong.

"It's not right that after giving a list, the PNP chief would delete the name on the list," Escudero said.

In the same hearing, Panlilio criticized Pan for giving him excuses that he variously called "erroneous, trivial and petty."

For one, Panlilio said Pan claimed that Hang could not be assigned in Pampanga because he had not been assigned in General Luzon at any time in his career.

Pan said Singian, his choice, has to complete his two-year stint in Pampanga before being replaced.

"I need a provincial director who is staunchly against jueteng. I wanted something fishy [with the way my request has been handled]. It has been managed in a very unprofessional manner. I wonder if the PNP is here on stopping jueteng in Pampanga," Panlilio said.

The governor at the opening of the hearing showed that he reiterated his request for Hang five times starting September 2007 or a month after Hang's name appeared in the Napoleon list.

Director Edgardo Acuña, director for personnel and records of the PNP, denied that this bid the Napoleon list. Pan did not attend the hearing.

Acuña said the document "got lost," apologizing to Panlilio in the hearing for the "administrative misunderstanding."

When the list finally got to Pan, Acuña said Pan asked for reconsideration.

Acuña said Razon granted this because Hang held a "vital" post in the transformation program. Razon's approval was given "verbally."

Prayer

Asked if Pan committed any violation in the non-transmittal of the first list, Acuña said: "It might be a violation of certain policies but there was a consolation prayer from him and that prayer was accepted. In effect, what is violated when a prayer for reconsideration was accepted by national headquarters?"

Acuña could not tell the chances of Hang's appointment in Pampanga.

"I don't know. He have an independent process of selection," he said.

Panlilio had turned down the second list containing the names of Senior Superintendents Eunice Sabapong, Cristino Campanilla and Singian.

The governor said he would still pass for Hang or other competent officers.

Aquino said the committee would work to strike out a provision in the PNP law. This empowers the police to appoint acting officers on an acting status and to consider their views as a form of virtually designating them as provincial or city directors.

Army, PNP execs say NDF consultant not tortured

KALAW, ISABELA — POLICE AND MILITARY officials have denied reports that a National Democratic Front peace consultant who was arrested on May 13 in Real province was tortured.

Senior Supt. Manuel Pelaez, Cagayan Valley director of the police's Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, said Ronaly Bello Malayao, 29, has been under "right security" with the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology in Tuguegarao City.

Pelaez said Malayao has been in BJMP custody since May 23. Pelaez, however, declined to disclose information on where Malayao was detained.

Maj. Gen. Benjamin Dolumbo, commander of the Army's 5th Infantry Division, said Malayao's rights were never violated when he was arrested by CIDG personnel and members of the Army's 502nd Infantry Brigade Intelligence unit inside a bus in Cabiao, Nueva Ecija, on May 13.

Rev. Fr. Bernardino Antonio Cecilio, head of human rights advocate group Karapatang Cagayan Valley said they received reports claiming that Malayao, spokesperson of the NDF Northern Luzon, was tortured while under government custody.

Dolumbo said the military would welcome the filing of charges against policemen and soldiers involved in Malayao's arrest.

"It is their right and we welcome any court [case] to [air] our side," said Dolumbo.

Malayao was presented to reporters at the military's Camp Melchor dela Cruz in Gamu, Isabela, on May 20. Army officials, however, prevented reporters from talking to him.

Dolumbo identified Malayao as the deputy secretary general of the Northern Luzon Regional Party Committee of the New People's Army.

He said Malayao is also known as Ka Hilario, Ka Norpo, Ka James and Ka Edu.

Malayao, according to Dolumbo, was arrested following the issuance of warrants for two murder cases and a frustrated murder case in Tuguegarao City.

Senior Supt. Dominador Aquino Jr., Isabela police director, said Malayao is among the accused in the June 12, 2001, murder of former Cagayan Rep. Rodolfo Aguinaldo, a former military colonel.

Aquino said Malayao was also implicated in an ambush of Army soldiers in San Mariano town that killed six, and in the separate killings of a village chief in San Mariano and an Army soldier and a businessman in Ilagan town.

Villamor Visaya Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon

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ENVIRONMENTALISTS are protecting the entry of the Philippine National Oil Company into Mt. Kanlaon's buffer zone.

PNOC says it has permit to enter buffer zone of Mt. Kanlaon park

By Carla P Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—THE PHILIPPINE National Oil Co-Energy Development Corp. on Monday said it has secured the required permit for its geothermal power project in Mt. Kanlaon Natural Park (MKNP).

Gino de la Cruz, resident manager of the North Negros Geothermal Power Plant (NNGPP), said in a statement that the EDC has the permit and endorsements to tap geothermal energy in the MKNP buffer zone.

De la Cruz issued the statement in reaction to the plea of environment groups to ask the court to stop the EDC from entering the buffer zone.

The Green Alert Negros said the Sara Mt. Kanlaon Coalition on Sunday said they would seek a temporary restraining order against the EDC entry at the MKNP buffer zone.

Bacolod Bishop Vicente Navarro said the environment groups also continued to oppose the entry of the EDC into the buffer zone, saying it would destroy the rich irreplaceable biodiversity in the buffer zone.

But De la Cruz also explained that the EDC "respects the right of any person or group to file (for) a temporary restraining order against its entry to the Mt. Kanlaon Natural Park (MKNP) buffer zone."

He also said that the company would be ready to answer the issues in court.

The EDC has presented its environmental management plan for the buffer zone at a dialog organized by the Department of Energy on May 19.

Last week, the provincial board has approved its entry to the buffer zone after getting the opinion and endorsements of the DOE, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the business sector, the electric cooperatives, the international non-government organization and the University of the Philippines at Los Baños College of Forestry. De la Cruz said.

"We are confident that the court will resolve issues expeditiously based on facts and the law and in consideration of the critical power situation in the province. We reiterate our commitment to provide power to the province starting 2008 and implement the environmental management plan approved by the Pres. Board," he said.

Soc Bilbis Zayas and Vice Gov. Emilio Yulo II said any group has the right to seek judicial remedies.

INQUIRER Northern Luzon

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Painful rebuilding after 'Cosme'

By Tonyet Ortejo
Sta. Cruz, Zambales

SIX DAYS AFTER TROPICAL Storm "COSME" unleashed heavy rains and violent winds over the northernmost town of Sta. Cruz in Zambales, Gloria Dabay was past the frustration of being left with ruins.

The mother of four in Barangay Laspuro Sixth was certain of what she said her family needed on the heels of the disaster, which officials regard as the worst to have hit the town after Mt. Pinatubo's eruptions in 1991.

Holding a bag of relief goods given others, President Macapagal-Arroyo visited Sta. Cruz on May 16, Dabay said in Filipino: "This is not enough. What we want are galvanized iron sheets and rice."

A neighbor, Carmen Bautista, cut in, almost shouting amid the din of Tessie songs filling the Satgaen Plaza: "We're rebuilding our houses but we have nothing to eat."

STORM "Cosme's" winds were so strong that galvanized iron sheets were torn off from houses, schools and the public market in Sta. Cruz, Zambales. INQUIRER PHOTO

Help

At this point, too, it was clear to locals (there what he wanted to do. After winds blew off the roof of his house and unearthed 10 mango trees in Barangay Bayto, Iloilo, 39, has been scouring for a job, preferably as a farm laborer, hoping to get paid P148 a day. Problem is, large landowners were not keen on plumbing during the wet season.

For Wilfredo Atichera, the circumstances were clear almost a week after: "as big as a mountain" his Barangay Lipay at 6 p.m. on Saturday. "I would do carpentry work in the meantime. I'm sure it would take some time to be able to go back to the coastal fish. The boat's engine is damaged. I hope there would be available loans for that," he said.

Surely, there would not be enough help to go around for the 10,064 families whose houses were either destroyed or damaged in Sta. Cruz's 25 villages or for about 8,000 displaced farmers and fishermen.

The help that came this day were P500,000 worth of GI sheets from the Hainan government and P1 million worth of plywood and GI sheets from the Iloilo flag Metropolitan Authority.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development gave P5,000 shelter assistance to 130 families and P1,000 "cash-for-work" certificates for them tapped to clear the piles of debris.

Relief goods were given to only less than 2,000 families.

Ms Arroyo ordered Public Works Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. to raise P180,000 worth of GI sheets for those were not giving out yet in Sta. Cruz but also to Pangasinan, La Union and other provinces in the Cordillera and Cagayan Valley.

As expected, the disaster would strain public resources. The Department of Public Works and Highways initially estimated that P500 million was needed to repair public infrastructures. The Department of Education requires more than P400 million to fix school buildings and other facilities.

Amid the demands by families for houses and alternative sources of income, Mayor Lando Ebaly stressed the value of self-reliance. "National government agencies are helping us here, but we cannot rely totally on them. I tell our folks here that we need to help each other," he said.

Two problems have emerged and it may slow down the construction phase, if not the rehabilitation stage, said Sto. Niño Moreno, the Sta. Cruz parish priest.

The ugly side of politics—divisiveness—has sharpened.

"This is sad to say but the mayor and the town council have not overcome their differences. This is the time to unite and consolidate. After the President's visit, they seemed not to be visible enough here," Moreno said.

On the other hand, he said a priority for the poorest of the poor had not been set. On Saturday, the parish pastoral council met, mobilizing chapters in the villages to assess who needed help most.

Bautista said the information system must be improved so emergency assistance from government or non-government organizations would be disentangled and incoming help directed to those hardly reached.

Bishop Florentino Lavarias has asked the Catholic Church's National Secretariat for Social Action (Nassa) to help the victims. Nassa has tapped the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office for assistance.

Electricity, an important lifeline, has not been restored.

Moreno said the disaster response had not yet shifted to rehabilitation. "That needs planning. We have not been informed. In the rebuilding efforts, various sectors should be involved," he said.

Volunteers from the Army and the AFMA, schools had cleared the national highways and some villages of debris, have already pulled out, leaving the residents to continue their work.

Politics in disaster

Gen. Artur Tolcan is frustrated about the "bureaucrats" amid the disaster.

"I directed relief operations in [the villages of] Bulbugo and Cuma to coordination with the DSWD, but I was engaged by Mayor Marty ... Pag hindi nadin Marty, hindi bubigyan ng relief (If you're not a Marty supporter, you won't receive relief goods). Many feel they are being left out," Tolcan said.

But the mayor said such reports were not true. "What I only asked is for groups to coordinate their help with us. That shouldn't be the process so that we are able to monitor which villages are getting help or not," he said.

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FREE military-initiated projects in different barangays in Sulu, including the Tanda Patong School and the Parang Hospital, were inaugurated yesterday.

New schools built by American, Filipino soldiers await Sulu kids

JOLO, SULU—NEW SCHOOL buildings await pupils of some villages of Talipao and Panglima Estino town where they go back to school in June, while residents of another Talipao village have been given a new health clinic.

Maj. Gen. Jeanette Sabbun, commander of the military-led Task Force Comet, yesterday said all the projects were inaugurated on Thursday.

"These are all military-initiated development projects funded by the Joint Special Operations Task Force Philippines (JSOTFP)," Sabbun said referring to the body supervising the deployment of US troops here and in other parts of Mindanao.

He said US soldiers also helped construct the school buildings in Imanpagat, Bandang and Maubok in Talipao, and Patong in Panglima Estino.

They also built the health clinic in Imanpagat Bliss in Talipao, Sabbun said.

The soldiers have been involved in various engineering works in Sulu under the humanitarian component of the US global war on terror.

"The military recognizes the importance of education and well-being in the attainment of its peace objectives," Sabbun said.

He said the military was hoping that "we would be able to help in addressing the problem [of lack of school buildings] here in Sulu."

"Investing in education is the key to peace and development, which is a long term solution," Sabbun added.

Maj. Eric Walker, JSOTFP communication, said they were ready to help bring projects in Sulu villages to improve the lives of the people.

US Help

Gov. Abdusakur Tan said the projects being built through the help of the US government have really helped the provincial government in delivering basic services to the people of Sulu.

He said that because people were seeing many projects nowadays, "peace and order in Sulu is getting better every day."

Sulu is identified as one of the lairs of the Abu Sayyaf, which is being linked with the Indonesian-based Jemaah Islamiyah.

Both the government and the military have acknowledged that poverty had contributed to the insurgency joined by the Abu Sayyaf. Ed Gerard, Inquirer Mindanao

PREPARED FOR SHOWDOWN Federico Lopez, CEO president of First Gen, is one of the prominent Lopez family members spotted along with Lopez-allied board director Cesar Virata on their way to a private office for an emergency meeting. LYNDON BO

Meralco calls gov't plan on 'lifeline subsidies' unfair

By Abigail L. Ho

MANILA ELECTRIC CO. YESTERday described as "unfair" the government's appeal to the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) for Meralco to absorb all "lifeline subsidies"—support given to poor consumers with monthly billings of 100 kilowatt-hours or less.

In an interview on the sidelines of Meralco's annual stockholders meeting, Meralco spokesperson Jessel Ivanne de la Peña said the petition of the Department of Trade and Industry should apply to all distribution utilities and electric cooperatives should it be approved by the ERC.

"It's unfair. Why are they singling Meralco out? It should apply to all, if that's what they really want to happen," she told reporters. (See related story on Page A8.)

In an omnibus petition, the DTI's Bureau of Trade Regulation and Consumer Protection asked the ERC to have Meralco reduced to multilifeline customers the amount paid for lifeline subsidy.

Under the current lifeline structure, customers consuming 0-50 kWh a month are entitled to a discount of 50 percent, those using 51-70 kWh a reduction of 35 percent, and those consuming 71-100 a discount of 20 percent.

Expand coverage

The petition seeks to expand the lifeline coverage to include those consuming up to 150 kWh. The discount structure would then be 50 percent for those in the 0-50 kWh bracket, 35 percent for those consuming 51-100 kWh, and 20 percent for those using 101-150 kWh a month.

Another option under the petition would be to increase the discount once for each of the existing consumption blocks to 60 percent, 40 percent and 20 percent, respectively.

De la Peña said the total subsidy amount varied each month, but added that in March, for example, the lifeline subsidy amounted to around P200 million.

She said Meralco was still doing simulations of how the company's absorption of the lifeline subsidy, as well as the possible increase of the lifeline discount or the expansion of the lifeline coverage, would affect its bottom line.

The simulated figures would be presented during the hearing for the omnibus petition on June 3, she added.

"Right now, we're only collecting 1% (per kWh) for distribution, supply and metering. If we'll have to absorb the lifeline subsidy, I don't know what will happen," she said.

Lopezes keep Meralco; Garcia vows to pursue ouster bid in courts

Front page A1

"They have a valid complaint lodged with the SEC challenging the proxies solicited by certain members," Hubert Guevara, a director of compliance and enforcement at the SEC, told reporters.

The move disrupted the meeting, but after an hour and a half of consultations by the Meralco board, assistant corporate secretary Anthony Suarez announced that the SEC order was "null and void."

He said the SEC order did not carry a docket number to show when it was filed and officially received, had no official seal and was only signed by an officer in charge and not by the entire commission sitting en banc. (See separate story on Page A12).

"This is the last recourse to stop the election," said Elpidio Lopez, chair of First Philippine Holdings Corp., flagship firm of the Lopez family, which owns 33 percent of Meralco and controls the utility.

Low blow

The family patriarch said Garcia's move was a "low blow" because the COH chief even wanted to invalidate the Lopezes' ballots.

True to form, the scrimpshow as Meralco Themire were charged with electricity—none of which came from any of the distributors utility's poorest lines. (Story on Page A1.)

Hours before the 9 a.m. meeting, the Meralco competent was already crawling with people, many of them employees who also held shares in the company.

In the hour leading to the start of the meeting, front of stockholders seated in front of designated registration tables in the Meralco main building lobby, eager to take part in what would be a battle royal between Garcia and the Meralco management.

Most of the members of the current Meralco board occupied the front row of the conference room, with Lopez and Garcia conspicuously ignoring each other despite their adjacent seats.

Unexpected twist

An unexpected twist came immediately after the opening ceremonies when Guevara stepped up to one of the microphones and read the order restraining to prevent the counting of the votes of the Meralco shareholders plus those of the proxies solicited in their names.

During the recess that followed the announcement of the SEC order, Garcia told reporters that the Lopez family and its allies in the utility were "trying to put in manufactured proxies."

"They never won on the list of the validated proxies and the total number of votes. Management solicited proxies without regard to certain rules and regulations that should have been followed. They haven't been very transparent," he said.

"We're very apprehensive of what will happen here. They're trying to put in illegal proxies. These saved only enough here as members of just 30.75 percent (of shareholders), but now we have around 66 percent and an unusually high number of proxies," Garcia added.

He said Meralco management should have relinquished control of the stockholders' meeting and let the SEC assume jurisdiction over it, including the election for the new board of directors.

18 reasons for nullity

Not to be outdone, Suarez said the incorporate board members came out of a conference with their lawyers acted with a statement that obviously slanted both Garcia and Guevara.

"After a review of the order, we deem such order null and void," Suarez said, pointing out 18 reasons for its conclusion.

He said the order did not have a docket number, date and the official seal of the SEC. It was also signed by just one commissioner, Jesus Martinez.

"Upon verification, we have received information that this order was issued without the benefit of a commission meeting, and that we are not aware of any complaint filed with the Compliance and Enforcement Division of the SEC," Suarez said.

He added that Martinez, in charge designated officer in charge in the absence of SEC Chair Fe Barin, had "no authority to issue this order on his own."

The fact that Martinez was the only signatory to the order, Suarez said, made it violative of the process in Martinez, in effect, "predetermined the validity of the COH proxies without proper investigation."

Suarez said neither Meralco nor any of its directors were not given notice of the order, denying them the opportunity to be heard—another violation of due process.

Also, since the matter between dissident and the Lopezes of Meralco was an intra-corporate matter, the regular courts and not the SEC had jurisdiction over it, he said.

He also said the COH was guilty of forum shopping as it also filed a similar complaint with the Pasay City Regional Trial Court, a GMA lawyer later said that the move before the court was subsequently dropped.

Prepare for consequences

Suarez then declared that Meralco would push through with the election despite the SEC order.

While the SEC voted Meralco's objections to its order, Guevara said the company's lawyers should look more closely at the Securities Regulation Code, particularly at the rules on proxy solicitation.

"You may proceed with the election, but subject to the decision of the SEC at a later date," he said.

Garcia stood up, grabbed a microphone and called the meeting "begun," as it was held the decision of the SEC order.

In a press conference here, Meralco regulatory management head Manuel Jacob said pushing through with the election was "the prudent thing to do so our stockholders will not be kept in limbo."

Not defiance of SEC

"It's only defiance (to the SEC order) if it's a valid, lawful order. But since it isn't valid and lawful, this is about preserving the right of the company and of the stockholders."

Asked if the results of yesterday's election would end all the controversy over who should be at the helm of Meralco, he said: "We're hoping that people will come to their senses and this will settle things. But we're prepared for any eventuality."

Garcia has charged Meralco with inefficiency and a lack of transparency that allowed Meralco to forge "sweetheart deals" with Lopez-owned generating firms resulting in rates he described as the highest in Asia next to Japan.

President Macapagal-Arroyo's allies in the Senate and the House of Representatives followed suit, threatening to revoke and divide the Meralco franchise covering 80 percent of the nation's power consumers.

Some analysts and consumers say Ms Arroyo instigated the ERC campaign to silence the Lopez-owned radio-television network ABS-CBN for its hard-hitting stand against government corruption, but Palace officials and Garcia have denied any government involvement in the fight with the Lopezes.

Philippine electricity rates are among the highest in Asia due to expensive deals with private power producers, the country's reliance on imported oil to generate electricity and widespread illegal tapping.

Meralco says it has to pay high prices for power bought from all generating firms, including those belonging to state-run National Power Corp., whose aging facilities mean it costs more to produce energy.

Stocks down

The Lopezes, one of the Philippines' most powerful dynasties, also own two power generation plants and gasfueled First Philippine Nichimen Co. Energy Development Corp.

Meralco shares were unchanged at P63 on Tuesday. The company's stock has dropped nearly 25% since mid-January. April when GMA started its moves against management.

With a report from Reuters

VIP ...A common stockholder like this woman suddenly becomes a very important person group in the fight for the control of the country's largest power distributor. JOE DE JESUS

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
CENTER FOR HEALTH DEVELOPMENT - CAMBOANGA PENINSULA
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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
No. 09-10-004

The DOH-Center for Health Development - Zamboanga Peninsula, Zamboanga City through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites supplies and deliveries to submit a contract to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project.

Name of Project: Procurement Drugs and Medicines
Location: DOH-CHD-ZP
Brief Description: Procurement of various Drugs and Medicines
Approved Budget for the Contract: Php 6,152,884.30

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last 5 years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall be conducted.

All participants seeking Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post Qualification and Award of contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

The complete schedule of activities is listed below:

ACTIVITIES	SCHEDULE
Issuance of Bid Documents	May 26, 2010
PRE-BID CONFERENCE	June 8, 2010 @ 9:30 A.M.
Opening of Bid Documents	June 15, 2010 @ 1:30 P.M.
Bid Evaluation	June 16, 2010 @ 1:30 P.M.

Bid documents will be available to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Five Hundred Pesos (Php 500.00) to the Cashier. Bid documents must be issued only to the BAC Secretariat Office.

The DOH-CHD Zamboanga Peninsula assumes no responsibility to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids and reserves the right to reject any and all bids, declare a failure of bidding or not award the contract.

(Sgd.) EMMA G. TORRES, RC, MPH
Medical Officer III
Chairperson - Bids and Awards Committee

Date: May 26, 2010

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
CENTER FOR HEALTH DEVELOPMENT - ZAMBOANGA PENINSULA
Upper Calarian, Zamboanga City
Tel. no. 991-1212, 991-1213 loc. 24 fax 991-1280
E-mail: dohchdcp@yahoo.com

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The DOH-CHD Zamboanga Peninsula, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites prospective bidders for the Supply and Delivery of Assorted Medicines (ICUs), under the project listed below, to apply for eligibility and to bid for the said project.

Name of Contract: Procurement of Medicines (Upper Calarian) 2010 Building
Location: Zamboanga City
Brief Description: 1,000 sq.m. 2 Storey DPH Building for Outpatient
Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC): Php 10,000,000.00
Contract Duration: 30 calendar days

Prospective bidders should have completed a similar PCAB License applicable to the contract to be bid, within the last five (5) years from the date of submission and receipt of bids. The bidder's experience as supported by submitted contracts shall be considered by the procuring entity in the determination of the bidder's eligibility. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall be conducted as per the Philippine Government Procurement Policy Board (PPB) Resolution No. 09-2005 dated 31 August 2005. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All participants seeking to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post Qualification and Award of contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of BAC activities is as follows:

BAC Activities	Schedule
1. Posting/Publication/Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid	May 26 - June 11, 2010
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms	May 26 - June 11, 2010
3. Submission of Eligibility Documents	June 11, 2010 @ 9:30 A.M.
4. Notice of Results of Eligibility Check	June 12, 2010
5. Issuance of Bid Documents	June 14, 2010
6. Pre-Bid Conference	June 15, 2010 @ 10:00 A.M.
7. Receipt and Opening of Bids	June 16, 2010 @ 9:30 A.M.

The BAC will accept a prospective bidder's Eligibility Forms at DOH-CHD Zamboanga Peninsula, Upper Calarian, Zamboanga City, upon their submission on 14 June 2010 and upon their payment of the non-refundable amount of Five Hundred Pesos (Php 500.00) to the Cashier. Bidders may also download the Eligibility Forms at the DOH-CHD Zamboanga Peninsula website. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Documents duly filled out to the BAC at the said address. They may also submit the results of the Eligibility Check duly filled out by the BAC to the said address.

The BAC will issue Bidding Documents only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible to the bidding upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Five Thousand Pesos (5,000.00) to the DOH-CHD Zamboanga Peninsula Cashier.

The DOH-CHD Zamboanga Peninsula assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) EMMA G. TORRES, RC, MPH
Medical Officer III
BAC - Chairperson

Date: May 26, 2010

GSIS ...

From page A1

...n their guard.

An official, who had knowledge of the plot, to shake up the board of the country's largest power distributor, said the "divestment" was important because the Lopez family was expecting a full frontal attack from the government led by the GSIS.

The plan included calls to oust pro-consumers Sy Wiseman Lim, Democrito Mendoza, Jesus Arranz and Ernesto Ordoñez, all from the boardroom brawl, and by leading industry observers that Garcia would back down without public Palace backing.

Also part of the plan was to float the idea that the GSIS would ask the courts to issue an injunction on yesterday's annual stockholders' meeting, ostensibly because it had failed to gain access to "proxy votes" records.

TRO

The GSIS filed a motion to then withdrawn with the Pasay City Regional Trial Court, but immediately withdrew it.

GSIS legal counsel Rolando Elamparo said the strategy was to divert the attention of the Lopezes away from gaining support for a temporary restraining order (TRO).

The Lopezes need not have looked far as the SSS filed a complaint on Monday morning at the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)—only a few hundred meters from Mendoza headquarters.

Despite filing the complaint earlier in the day, the GSIS called a press conference in the afternoon, where Elamparo denied having filed a petition for a TRO.

The GSIS lawyer told reporters that the state pension fund did not expect to wrest control of Meralco from the Lopezes. He said the GSIS "would be happy" to retain four seats on the 11-member board.

That very same day, SEC Commissioner Jesus Marinas signed the order favoring the GSIS petition to "not enable" the counting of all proxies gathered by the Lopez group. The order would be delivered by SEC representatives to a surprise during the Meralco stockholders' meeting.

Stunned

When SEC director Hubert Guevara read the "reset and desist order" on the floor of the annual meeting, he was stunned by its implications, and the Lopezes and their allocates were chained by Garcia's deft maneuvers.

"Without the Lopezes' proxies, they would have only 30 percent for Meralco's total outstanding stock," said another business ally of Garcia. "Besides, [an] about 40 percent, including proxies. He will win."

The plan...had a hint ...ccessful—called for the

When smallest to biggest owners become electric

Viewpage A2

family that sticks together.

In the jampacked (and standing room only) theater, members of the family made their presence felt in support of Meralco chair and chief executive Manuel "Manolo" Lopez.

The meeting also proved to be one for the books—in terms of length, excitement and the colorful personalities from all corners of the business, government and consumer sectors that graced the much-anticipated event.

Garcia and allies

Nemesio Garcia, president and general manager of the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) and the Lopezes' nemesis of the moment, were less than welcome guests, chilling Meralco employees for their lack of reassurances and disregard of decorum—after he was booed and jeered by an audience that, it turned out, was not all Meralco employees.

Though not in his home turf, Garcia had the choice of allies in the audience, led by GSIS legal counsel Estrella Elamparo, who did not take a bear unyielding his remarks about the employees' lack of manners.

Several others were one with Garcia in his fight to dislodge the Lopezes as core owners of Meralco, resulting in a heated exchange among a few shareholders.

Gina steps forward

Seemingly unable to hold back her sweetness, Gina, daughter of the late patriarch Eugenio Lopez Jr., stepped up as one of the microphones to defend the family name.

Addressing the crowd of more than 1,000 people—and directing her remarks straight at Garcia—she said that comments lambasting the Lopez name were offensive and bad for both.

"The statements about the Lopezes resorting to 'dirty tricks' have offended me and other members of the family. We've always lived with the principles of integrity and courage," Gina said.

She also said the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) order preventing the recognition, counting and tabulation of votes by Manolo and five other Meralco stockholders and proxies under their names was totally unfair.

"The situation that the SEC is opting for is like our giving a voice to half of the people here. It's not an election at all. Where's the democracy in that?" Gina said.

"What the SEC wants goes against the principles of fair play and integrity," she added.

Rival groups

The Lopez-GDO camps were besieged outside the theater among a jumbled mass of small shareholders, who in the past had had no interest in attending the annual meeting.

While heated words were unleashed inside the air-conditioned theater, groups that were against the Lopez bloc, or against Garcia, or against both competed for associates' attention.

When the meeting opened on schedule at 9 a.m., the lobby was still packed with stockholders trying to gain entrance and beat the 9:30 a.m. cut-off time for admission.

At 10 minutes past the deadline, small shareholders—like senior citizen Antonio Mapa—had not breakfasted—stood disappointed in the middle of the marble floor, still unable to get in.

"We would have arrived just a little after 9 a.m. if not for the heavy traffic," Mapa said. "They should have anticipated how many were coming."

But members of the Meralco staff said that the rule had to be followed: Latecomers cannot get in.

One vote per share

Still, Mapa said it was a rare experience for low-level line boss—lineal despite their having attended all annual meetings since they became shareholders in 1981.

He said the had disposed of her own shares...which she had bought with her savings—and what was left were her husband's 211 shares.

"My husband bought his shares through salary deduction when he was still working as a coins operator with Meralco. Corp's lineal subsidiary," Mapa said.

With one vote per share, the Mapas' 211 shares would amount to 0.000000021 percent of the 966 million shares represented yesterday.

In contrast, Garcia said he represented 350 million shares, or 36 percent of yesterday's total.

But Mapa felt as involved as any other major shareholder in the battle for the company's control.

Easing the hunger

Asked whether she agreed with the GSIS' idea of changing Meralco's management team, Mapa said, "I don't want the GSIS to manage Meralco. I want the same management but they should listen to the people's views, especially about the high power rates."

At least, the Mapas and the others who natured late were not allowed to go hungry. Around 11 a.m., she and her husband were each seen eating a plastic bag full of McDonalds products.

Those with a meal stub were able to claim a meal consisting of a piece of chicken, a viand, fried rice, a mini pie and a can of soda.

Another stockholder, who identified herself only as Shely, said it was her first time to attend the annual meeting since she bought shares in the mid-1990s.

"I came here because of the controversies," said Shely in an English-tinged accent. "I think I will attend the meeting every year from now on."

She said she bought her "more than 3,000" shares as a GSIS member, but she believed Garcia should take his unsavory exit.

"The Securities and Exchange Commission (from which Garcia obtained an order to stop the proceedings) is not the proper forum," Shely said.

Also deployed in the complex were members of a SWAT team armed with "baby armalites" and nightsticks. They had not been in previous annual meetings.

Yesterday they even had K-9 dogs.

Early birds

Employees of Meralco, its subsidiaries and affiliates, and other firms in the Lopez group completely filled up the theater in Pasig City as early as 7:30 a.m.

By the morning rush hour, it was the another out-house but already it was "standing room only" as per Lopez. "turnaun stockholders" and "guests" sat or stood in the aisles.

Outside, on both sides of the main lobby, more employees broke out into long speeches when Manolo Lopez walked in. The same employees booed Garcia when he arrived minutes later.

"Lopez pa rin! Drill for Lopez!" they chanted as Garcia walked in.

Inside, the Lopezes seemed to be showing their corporate rivals no quarter. There were times when no one in the theater could get their mobile phones to work, but text messages could be sent and received, and no calls could be made.

No signals

Reporters who covered the stockholders' meetings of other Lopez firms in the same venue early last week noted that the absence of mobile phone signals was a new development.

Even Meralco employees who regularly used the venue were surprised by the phenomenon, prompting some to whisper that the signals were being "jammed" by persons, perhaps even Garcia himself—to prevent coordination among various GSIS representatives who were expected to be armed near the venue's four public microphones.

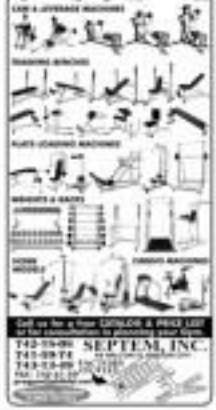
Meralco groups that trooped to the theater also reported to be bored. They said consumers should have a voice in running power utilities.

"The high cost of power must be addressed decisively by the government now only because it is a basic to production but it also a heavy burden on the poor," said Dindin ng Manggawa chair Rene Escobar Magtibay.

Members of the Freedom from Debt Coalition referred to the fight between the Lopez and Garcia groups as a battle of giants.

"When two elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers, as the saying goes," said FDC media officer Bobby Tuazon.

"So this genuine play of two elite groups vying for control of the power sector, through the strategic control of Meralco, it is the consumer who suffers as manifested in the form of high electricity rates." With a report from Jerome Aning



GSIS plan to lie low . . .

Viewpage A13

GSIS to elect five board members, plus nominate one independent director who would be sympathetic to its their calls, according to Elamparo.

The Lopezes would then be left with four directors, plus one sympathetic independent director—tipping liberal advantage in favor of the GSIS.

Despite losing the majority, the official said Garcia did not plan to "take over" Meralco but merely replace key managers. "We want to replace managers, people," the official said. "The goal is to lower electricity rates within two months."

Intervities

As it turned out, however, the Lopezes' lawyers saved the day for the influential family, finding "inflexibles" in the SEC order, invoking several technicalities like the absence of a docket number, date and official seal on the session notice.

What looked like the SEC's technical errors gave the Lopez group the courage to disregard the order and proceed with the stockholders' meeting.

During a recess in other stockholders to vote for their Sec-

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DOUBLE CELEBRATION
Flags fly high on standpe in Sta. Cruz, Manila, in celebration of National Flag Day today and Independence Day on June 12.

Raps vs 24 in investment plan

Broadcaster, basketball coach among complainants

By Lala B. Salamero and Alinor M. Lopez

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION HAS filed syndicated estafa charges against 24 people who allegedly swindled broadcaster Korina Sanchez, basketball coach Jose Antonio Yuuri and 16 other people of more than P500 million through an investment scheme.

Charged on May 21 in the Department of Justice were officers of Power Generation Trading Corp. (Power One) which claimed to be involved in the trade of lubricants, fuels and other processed oils.

The suspects were identified as Dr. Rudy Enrique Ubiña, Power One president; his wife Lourdes Tiu-Ubiña, treasurer; corporate secretary Mario Francisco Soriano; and their business partners, Dr. Ramon Moreno and wife Nerda.

Also charged were Katherine Rose Gallardo, Jesus Anastacio Ordiz, Abner Cabagning, Michael Medina, Fernando Joy Baglao, Glenn Jeremiah Alfaro, Alfredo Ramos, Yolanda Garcia, Allen David, Sergio David, Bernard de Francia, Andrew de Vicente, Austin de Manzila, Antonio Deconcilla, Felipe Parana, Abel Castro, Rodin Mangkayan and Jose Stonacio Reyes who has passed away.

The complainants, on the other hand, apart from Sanchez and Yuuri, were Jocelyn and Silvano Yao, Rosemary de Galicia, Jocelyn Rocca, Anatholy Rodriguez, Joel Wind Villa, Lino Baete, Philip Reyes, Pichelle Rapchis, Jose Pulmi Jr., Rufino Aguilera, Ignacio de Villa Jr., Cecilio Sivan, Alexis Hizonteau, Eusebio Umali and John Rhodes Cruz.

They claimed that they were defrauded of more than P500 million, cash each of them having invested anywhere from P1.4 million to P275 million in Power One from June 2005 up to this year.

In its letter referral to the DOJ, the NBI said Power One misled in an acte sine that it sold Chevron and Unocal products. But a check showed the firm was not an authorized distributor of Chevron while Unocal had filed a case against Dr. Ubiña.

The NBI added that it was the Montes people who enticed the complainants to invest their money in Power One by promising them a guaranteed profit of six to eight percent monthly.

Allen Conrado, NBI Anti-Graft Division chief, said Power One was registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission as a company dealing in petroleum goods. It listed its office as Unit 604 Empire Place, 1473 Mauaglaya St., Sta. Cruz, Manila.

The firm, Conrado added, did not have a secondary license to procure investments.

The NBI said the suspects operated other companies in Iriga—Avenueservice Inc., St. Expedition Industrial Sales Corp. (Swiss) and Commodities Asia Pacific Inc.

The victims told the NBI that they either deposited their money directly to the company's bank account or handed it over personally to the officers.

In 2006, however, the victims became suspicious when checks issued by the company allegedly bounced.

Investors contacted Sanchez to get her side but she declined to comment. With Marinel Cruz

DID YOU KNOW

YUUR is the 16th installment of Lowell Tabada, former senator and outlawed, in 1992. Tabada died at the age of 53 of kidney failure weeks ago in QC. Lolet's hospital Cardiac City. The late Tabada, who served as senator for 24 years, was among those who actively opposed the presence of foreign war troops in the Philippines.

Cyril L. Bondoc's Inquirer Research

Safety measures in place for students back in school

By Julie M. Aurelio and Nancy C. Carvajal

FOUR THOUSAND POLICEMEN FROM the National Capital Region Police Office will be deployed in schools throughout the metropolis in preparation for the opening of classes next week.

In a command conference held yesterday in Camp Bagong Diwa, Taguig City, NCRPO Director Ismael Rubia ordered the Rizal police district chiefs, commanders and station heads to take measures that would ensure the safety of students.

"In a nutshell, we back to school jumps. [Our] will focus on the safety of our students and that they are protected from criminal elements," Rubia said.

Dubbed "Oplan Balik Eskwela 2008," the security plan also calls for the participation of the Department of Education and Metro Manila government officials.

Objective

"The objective is to strengthen our visibility in schools to prevent any form of criminal activities such as kidnapping, theft and sexual abuse among students, particularly in Metro Manila," Rubia said in reference to the beginning of discipline classes in November City here today.

He stressed, however, that he does not see any security threat at the opening of classes this year.

Around 2.1 million students, from the nursery to high school level, are expected to go back to school on June 16, said Department of Education (DepEd) regional director Ricardo Rosales.

Rubia has outlined increased police visibility and the conduct of antiriot campaigns in areas near schools.

He directed police station commanders to meet with homeowners' groups, parent-teacher associations, barangay officials and school guards to discuss security plans with the resumption of classes in June.

Hazards

Rubia also ordered police chiefs to close arrest near schools of graffiti, designate pedestrian lanes and keep an eye on hazards such as open manholes and live electrical wires.

"We will bring the matter to the attention of local government officials so they can act on these problems," he explained.

Rubia also asked his men to watch out for members selling prohibited materials near schools and to file appropriate charges against those caught they are arrested.

"We are not only securing our students but also trying to provide them an environment free from such distractions," he added.

Informal shops in the vicinity of schools, meanwhile, will be also inspected to see if stricter hygiene guidelines are followed there.

Rubia added that they are also finalizing "Oplan Saklolo" which would provide transportation and other forms of aid to stranded commuters and students when the metropolis is hit by typhoons or rainstorms flooding.

MetroBriefs

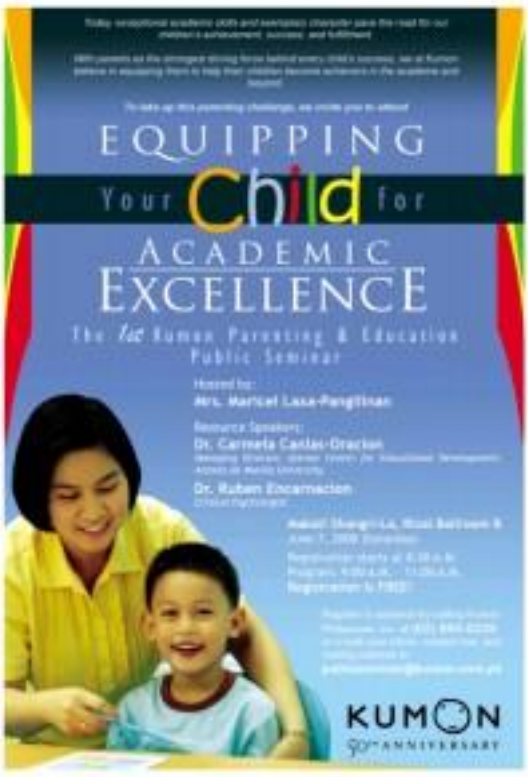
Foul play eyed in agent's death

INVESTIGATORS are not ruling out foul play in the death of a military intelligence agent who allegedly committed suicide by shooting himself inside his Quezon City home on Monday night.

Chief Inspector Nilo Tayag, QCPD Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit, said they are still waiting for the results of a paraffin test conducted on the body of PFC Jason Famoso of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, to determine if he fired a gun. He said they have also requested a ballistic test on the .45-caliber pistol Famoso allegedly used to kill himself. Marlon Ramos

Youth project launch today

"MAMAMAYROng mga Bata," a community-based initiative of Mamamayong City to benefit children in conflict with the law and other children at risk, will be launched at 9 a.m. today at Bo. Bitoon de Dilando Extension in Loyola Heights, Quezon City. The undertaking is a joint project of the Ateneo Human Rights Center, Mamamayong City Mayor Ramon Bautista, owner of the city's barangays, the Anti-Violence Task Force, the Mamamayong City Police Station and the City Social Welfare and Development Department.



WorldBriefs

Canadian minister quits over secret papers

OTTAWA—Canadian Foreign Minister Maxime Bernier resigned on Monday after admitting that he had left classified documents in an unsafe place, Prime Minister Stephen Harper said. Bernier had been under increasing pressure to quit amid revelations that a former girlfriend was suspected of being linked to figures in organized crime. "Minister Bernier has learned and informed me that he left classified government documents in a non-secure location. This is a serious error that has accepted his responsibilities in offering to resign," a grim-faced Harper told reporters. *Reuters*

8 killed in Afghan blast

KABUL—An official said a roadside bomb hit a bus in western Afghanistan, killing eight civilians. Younus Fayadl, deputy governor of Farah province, said the bomb hit the vehicle on Tuesday as it was traveling to neighboring Nimruz province. He said nine civilians were wounded. All the casualties were men. The western Afghan provinces are bordering Iran and frequently hit by insurgency attacks. *AP*

Shell pipeline in Nigeria attacked

LAGOS—A Nigerian militant group said it had attacked an oil pipeline run by Royal Dutch Shell on Monday and killed 11 soldiers in the main producing region of Africa's biggest oil exporter. The raid by the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), one of the most organized groups in the region, came four days after the army said it had thwarted an attack on another Shell facility in the strategic region. The Nigerian military confirmed an explosion near a flow station but denied making any arrest. *AFP*

Mogadishu fighting kills 13

MOGADISHU—Islamist insurgents attacked African Union peacekeepers in Mogadishu on Monday, sparking fierce clashes that killed at least 13 Somalis, most of them civilians, officials and witnesses said. Insurgents attacked a base housing a Ugandan troops contingent from the African Union Mission in Somalia, a spokesperson said. "There was an attempted attack by these violent people on our base in 64 area," Bashir Gabule told AFP, adding that Ugandan forces killed two of the attackers who overcame their assault with rifles and artillery. *AFP*

RARE TURTLE
A DOUBLE-HEADED red-eared slider turtle "Takara," named after a boy who found it and meaning "treasure" in Japanese, stands on gravel at Hinagiku nursery school in Moriyama, western Japan, on May 21. *REUTERS*

Mars lander prepares for digging mission

PASADENA, CALIFORNIA—Nasa's Phoenix Mars Lander spent its first full day in the Martian arctic plains checking its instruments in preparation for an ambitious digging mission to study whether the site could have once been habitable.

The dew-legged lander set down on Sunday in relatively flat terrain covered by features resembling polygonal shapes. The geometric cracks are likely caused by the repeated freezing and thawing of frozen ice.

Images beamed back late Monday showed the elbow joint of Phoenix's scoop-digging robotic arm still partly covered by a protective sheath. The sheath was supposed to fully unwrap after landing.

Mission scientists downplayed the problem, saying they could still wiggle out the arm for digging.

"This is a minor inconvenience," said Deborah Bass, deputy project scientist at Nasa's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena. "We're going to have to do a little bit of downwiggling."

Bass said the process of moving the 2.4-metre long arm was still scheduled for Tuesday.

It will be another week before Phoenix takes the first scoop of soil. After the initial test, the lander will spend the rest of the mission closing through layers of soil to reach ice that is believed to be buried 30 centimetres below the surface.

"We've only looked at one tiny little dib" of the landing site, said principal investigator Peter Smith of the University of Arizona, Tucson. *AP*

China evacuates 80,000 in path of floodwaters

BEIJING—CHINESE MILITARY officials on Tuesday ordered the evacuation of 80,000 people at risk from collapsing dams in a dangerously swelling lake formed by this month's devastating earthquake.

As the death toll from the May 12 quake jumped to 67,000, more area said that emergency workers aimed to move the residents from their homes near the so-called "quake lake" by midnight on Tuesday.

Around 70,000 people were evacuated earlier from Beichuan County as concern rose that the lake—formed when the quake triggered landslides that blocked the Jian river—could overflow and surge downstream.

Heightening the sense of fear still stalking Qiaozi southwestern Sichuan province, another strong aftershock measuring 5.4 on the Richter scale rattled the area and was felt in the provincial capital Chengdu.

About 30 minutes later, another aftershock measuring 5.7 shook neighboring Shaanxi province, China's state news agency Xinhua reported.

Authorities have had to cope with thousands of aftershocks and a myriad of other dangers while trying to provide food, shelter and medical help for the millions left homeless across an area the size of South Korea.

In Beijing, cabinet spokesperson Cao Weinian said the confirmed death toll stood at 67,183, with a further 20,790 missing.

"One of the most urgent tasks now is trying to prevent the lake—one of 32 said to be at risk—spilling over and swamping an area of some 1.3 million people.

Troops armed with dynamite are trying to blast channels through the debris blocking the river to reduce the level of the lake, thought to be holding some 156 million cubic meters of water.

Liu Ning, the water resources ministry's chief engineer who is supervising the operation, said people were being moved for their own safety.

"It's better for them to complain about the trouble than the evacuation would bring than to shed tears after the possible danger," he said.

The lake is inaccessible by road and the teams of soldiers, engineers and police had to hike through remote and mountainous terrain.

Li Hesheng, an engineer in the paramilitary People's Armed Police, said at least 50,000 cubic meters of debris would have to be removed for rescuers were aiming for 100,000 cubic meters to minimize the risk.

However, predictions of further rain threatened to make the operation more difficult and created fears among locals living in makeshift camps over their collapsed homes.

Wang Sanxu, 62, said the rescuers "bet like owner" in direct sunlight and "when it rains, they will be even more unbearable."

The government said last week that just over 5.6 million people and their livestock had been forced to seek refuge in tents or hastily erected units in temporary camps, but an untold number are still living without any shelter at all. *AFP*

Russia shot down Georgian drone —UN

TBILISI—THE UNITED NATIONS said on Monday that a Russian air force jet shot down an unmanned Georgian spy drone over Abkhazia last month, corroborating Tbilisi's claims that Moscow is aiding the rebel territory.

A UN report compiled from video footage, witness statements and radar records reached a weighted independent conclusion to date of Tbilisi's allegations—denied by Moscow—that a Russian jet downed its spy plane on April 20.

The report said radar records showed the fighter jet headed into Russian airspace after shooting down the spy plane over breakaway Abkhazia.

Where compelling evidence is the contrary the leads to the conclusion that the aircraft belonged to the Russian air force," said the report presented on the website of the UN mission in Georgia, www.unomig.org.

Russia's defense ministry denied this, saying "planes of Russian air forces made no flights over Georgia's border on April 20."

"There can't be any talk of any violation of Georgia's state border, to say nothing of shooting down an unmanned aircraft," said ministry spokesperson Alexander Drobyshevsky.

Russia had previously said the drone was shot down by unidentified helicopter operated by Abkhazian separatists.

Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili told reporters the UN report was "the first ever case when an international organization has had to cope with thousands of aftershocks and a myriad of other dangers while trying to provide food, shelter and medical help for the millions left homeless across an area the size of South Korea.

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Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili told reporters the UN report was "the first ever case when an international organization ... pointed to Russia for such actions."

The report contained "evidence accusation against Russia of an act of aggression," he said.

Last month's incident rocked already tense relations between Moscow and Tbilisi, already locked in a bitter dispute over Russian support for Abkhazia and Georgia's ambitions to join NATO.

Georgian officials had released a video, recorded by the spy plane's onboard camera before it was shot down, which showed a fighter plane approaching it and then launching a missile in its direction.

Abkhazia is recognized internationally as part of Georgia. But it has run its own affairs since it drove out Georgian forces in a separatist war in the 1990s. *Reuters*

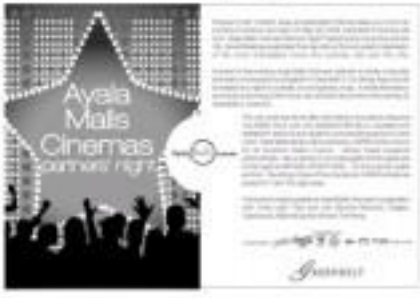
Israel has 150 nuke weapons —Carter

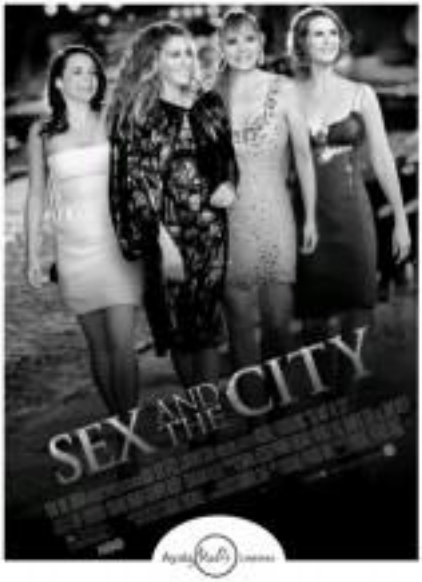
LONDON—FORMER US President Jimmy Carter has said Israel holds at least 150 nuclear weapons, the first time a US president has publicly acknowledged the Jewish state's arsenal.

Asked, at a news conference in Wales' Hay literary festival on Sunday how a future US president should deal with the Iranian nuclear threat, Carter put the risk in context by listing seven weapons held globally.

"The US has more than 12,000 nuclear weapons, the former Union (Russia) has about the same, Great Britain and France have several hundred, and Israel has 150 or more. We have a plethora of enormous weapons ... but only of seven weapons by far of nations in distant Asian enclaves or a pinpoint accuracy target," he said, according to a transcript of his remarks.

While the existence of Israel's nuclear weapons is widely assumed, Israeli officials have never admitted their existence and US officials have stuck to that line in public for years. *Reuters*





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The WORLD

Edna Lawrence B. Olasoo

Foreigners enter Burma's cyclone-hit delta

RANGOON—FOREIGN AID WORKERS ON TUESDAY pressed into Burma's (Myanmar) irrawaddy Delta, testing the junta's pledge to open up areas where one million people have yet to receive aid three weeks after the cyclone.

Six foreign staff based in Rangoon with the UN children's fund Unicef were allowed to join teams of mainly Burmese workers to assess the scale of the devastation left by Cyclone Nargis, which left 133,000 dead or missing.

"We've very pleased obviously that we've been able to get [international colleagues out" into the delta, Unicef spokesperson Shantha Bloemen said in Bangkok.

Other charities such as Doctors Without Borders were also sending foreign staff into the delta, testing Burma's promise to open up to international experts whose specialist knowledge is needed to ramp up emergency operations.

Most of the 2.4 million people in desperate need of food, shelter and medicine have yet to receive any international aid, according to the United Nations.

After three weeks of insisting that the military could handle the aid effort itself, Burma's tightly controlled state media on Tuesday hailed the work of the UN agencies following a dozen conferences in the weekend.

"The United Nations and its agencies took prompt action to carry out relief and rehabilitation mission with the contributions of international organizations," the official New Light of Myanmar said.

"Providing food, clothing and shelter to the victims are to be carried out with the aid of the international community," it said, adding that reconstruction would be done "with the help of skilled workers."

"With the contributions of the UN, donor and the international community in that regard, we firmly believe that the rehabilitation of storm victims will be materialized zoomers," the government mouthpiece said.

Donors offered tens of millions of dollars in cyclone aid at the weekend during a conference hosted by the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian nations. AFP

Detention extended

RANGOON—DEMOCRACY LEADER Aung San Suu Kyi's house arrest has been extended by one year, either news official said AFP saying authorities informed her of the decision in a brief meeting Tuesday.

"Her detention was extended by one year," one official told AFP.

Seven Burmese officials visited her lakeside home around 4 p.m., and delivered the news during a 10-minute meeting, he said. AFP

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Businessman says he gave cash to Olmert

JERUSALEM—THE KEY FIGURE IN A CORruption case that threatens to topple Prime Minister Ehud Olmert made a dramatic courtroom appearance on Tuesday telling prosecutors how he handed cash-stuffed envelopes to the Israeli leader and speculating that some of the money went to fund Olmert's freedoms for fine hotels, first-class flights and luxury goods.

Jewish-American businessman Morris Talansky told the court that some of the money he turned over at meetings in New York and Jerusalem was to cover Olmert's political activities over a 15-year period. But he also said Olmert's assistant, Shula Zaken, would often ask for cash to cover unidentified personal expenses.

Talansky, 75, said there were no records of how that money was spent. "I only know that he loved expensive cigars. I know he loved pens, watches. I found it strange," Talansky told the court, then shrugged.

Police are investigating whether Olmert illegally took up to $500,000 from Talansky in illegal campaign contributions or bribes before becoming prime minister. Olmert has said the funds were legal campaign contributions, and has promised to step down if indicted.

The investigation is the fifth that police have launched into Olmert's financial affairs since he took office, and there is widespread speculation that the seven former attorney and Jerusalem mayor might not be able to weather the latest charges.

Police have said the charges span a 13-year period, when Olmert was mayor of Jerusalem and minister of industry and trade. The probe is expected to take months. AP

Film director Sydney Pollack dies of cancer

POLLACK

LOS ANGELES—HOLlywood filmmaker Sydney Pollack, who won a pair of Academy Awards for the epic romance "Out of Africa" and starred greater for acting roles in films including "Tootsie" and "Michael Clayton," died on Monday after a battle with cancer, his spokesperson said. He was 73.

During a varied career spanning almost half a century, Pollack directed such stars as Barbra Streisand and Robert Redford in "The Way We Were," Tom Cruise in "The Firm" and Dustin Hoffman in "Tootsie." Redford starred in seven of his films, including "Out of Africa," alongside Meryl Streep.

Pollack died at his home in the coastal Los Angeles suburb of Pacific Palisades at about 5 p.m. He was diagnosed with cancer about 10 months ago, but doctors were never able to determine the primary source of the disease, said spokesperson Leslee Dart.

At the time of the diagnosis, he was directing the HBO movie "Recount," but left the project to seek medical treatment. The political drama about the controversial Florida presidential vote in 2000 premiered on the cable network on Sunday.

The tall, curly-haired Indiana native, who started out as an acting coach and TV director, focused on producing and acting in later years.

He received a Best Picture Oscar nomination this year for producing the George Clooney legal thriller "Michael Clayton," in which he had a supporting role as an attorney. He is featured in the newly released romantic comedy, "Made of Honor," as actor Patrick Dempsey's mentoring dentist.

Pollack's final directing effort was the 2003 thriller "The Interpreter," starring Nicole Kidman and Sean Penn, and the 2006 documentary "Sketches of Frank Gehry" about the famed architect. Reuters

71 days to the 29th Summer Olympics
Beijing 2008

SPORTS

Editor Tokdyric S. Melendres Assistant Editor Francis T.J. Ochoa
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SOARING KILL: Hervie Bautista of Adamson rises high above the rest to deliver a spike against Maria Carmina Denise Acevedo of Ateneo. The Lady Falcons defeated the Lady Eagles to take Game 1 of the Shakey's V-League championship series. Story on A21 JOAN BONDOC

Harbour Centre goes for the kill; Cruz back

THE CHAMPIONSHIP GAME PLAN HARBOUR CENTRE LAID out sounds simple enough.

"We'll try to finish the series," said Batang Pier coach Jorge Gallent.

Coming from a team that has made winning always a way of life, the job doesn't look that tough.

The Batang Pier will fight for an unprecedented fifth straight PBL title against Rapsa Toothpaste in Game 4 of the Lipovitan Asahi Sports Cup Finals at 4 p.m. today at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum.

"If my shooters get their rhythm early and hustle (Castro) gets hot again, then we have a very, very good chance of winning one more," said Gallent.

After dropping the opener by the slimmest of margins, the Batang Pier won the last two games decisively to claim a 2-1 lead in the best-of-five series.

And it's especially Castro—recently crowned with his third straight Most Valuable Player award—who will spearhead the mission to validate Harbour Centre's status as the league's hottest rising team.

It's now up to Hapee to spoil Harbour Centre's bid for a fifth title in seven conferences.

For coach Louie Alas, it's quite clear that his Complete Protectors' success will depend on how well they can limit Castro's production.

And with Jerry Trae Bradley getting his medical approval, the Complete Protectors might just make the shaded lane a bit more inviting for the versatile Castro and the rest of the Batang Pier.

Case missed the Complete Protectors' last six games due to a left hamstring injury sustained in the semifinal caption.

"At least we have another player who is capable of scoring at least 10 points and grabbing eight rebounds," said Alas.

But Alas, forging a winner-take-all Game 5 remains probable after scoring notable individual performances in the Complete Protectors' Game 3 loss, 89-78, last Wednesday in Tanauan City.

The veterans paced the Complete Protectors with Reed Juntilla delivering 19 markers and Larry Rodriguez posting a double-double of 18 points and 11 rebounds.

"Judging the way we played in Game 3, we still have a chance, so the series is far from over," noted Alas.

The Batang Pier, too, came up with the same sentence on their watch list.

"We should also play tough defense especially against Reed and Larry," noted Gallent.
Jeannine M. Pepe

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Murakami books US Open slot with birdie

TOKYO—ATSUSHI MURAKAMI OF the Philippines was celebrating on Tuesday after earning his ticket to this year's US Open, where he will make his Majors debut.

Murakami birdied the last hole to clinch one of two berths, alongside marathon runner Craig Parry, in the 36-hole qualifier at Ibaraki Country Club in Osaka, Japan.

"I'm looking forward to my first US Open at Torrey Pines, where I have played many times previously when I was a junior," said the 24-year-old.

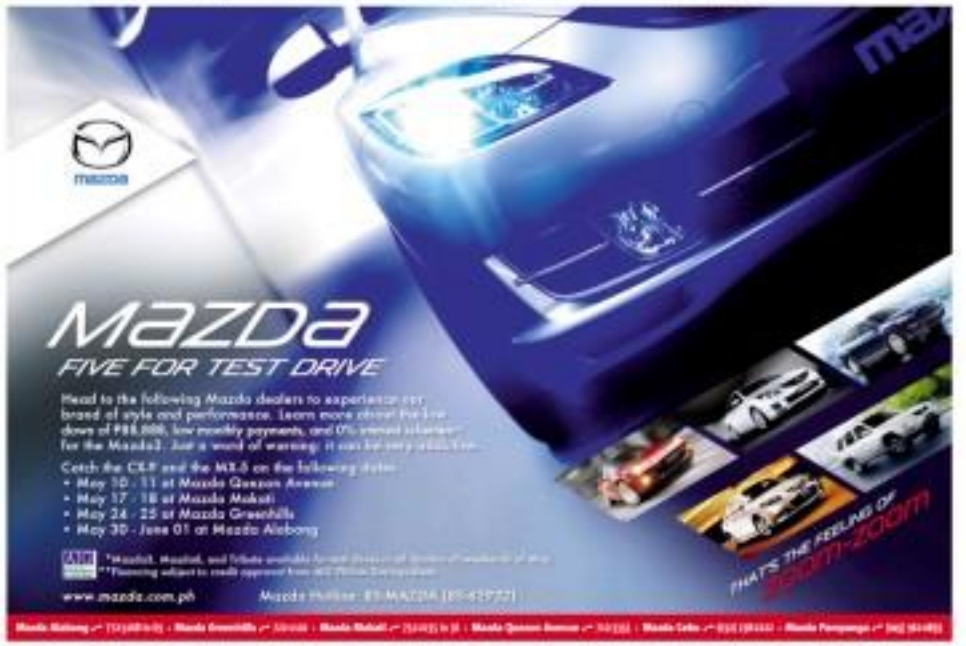
"My goal today was to avoid bogeys. But I missed putts from seven feet on the 10th and 17th holes and to be honest, I was ready to give up when those two bogeys. But I am really happy to make birdie at the last hole to get a spot."

Murakami, winner of last year's Iskandar Johor Open in Malaysia on the Asian Tour, carded matching rounds of three-under-par 69 to share top spot with Parry. A total of 12 players tied up for the two berths.

Former Asian Tour number one Thaworn Wiratchant of Thailand missed out on a tap-two spot by one stroke after rounds of 69 and 70 and earned second alternate status via a playoff.

Reigning Asian mens champion Liang Wen-chong of China shot rounds of 68 and 72 to finish three shots outside the qualifying mark while Thailand's Prayad Marksaeng withdrew after an opening 74.

MURAKAMI, A21



Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
[illegible]

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S
FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office applications for Alien Employment Permits.

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National/Citizenship	Position
JAPAN AIR-TECH INTERNATIONAL CO., LTD. [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
HARLEQUIN CASTING, LTD. [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
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MANPOWER OUTSOURCING SERVICES INC. (assigned at Alcatel-Packard Phils. Corp.) [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
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CORELLE TRADING LTD. CO. [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
MEXICO LOTUS CORPORATION [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
PHILSON FOOD & MARKET [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
LEXICONSULT INC. [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
MARBEL TECHNOLOGIES PHILS., INC. [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
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If you have any information/objection to the above-mentioned applications please communicate with the Regional Director.

ATTY. RICARDO D. MARTINEZ
Regional Director

PBA chooses Solar TV; Red Bull battles Air21

By Jana Mariano

THE PHILIPPINE BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION yesterday tied the knot with a new television partner after the league's board of governors agreed to ink a five-year deal with Solar Sports.

The cable giant won the league over with a P495 million-offer spread over those years.

"It's a done deal," said PBA Commissioner Sonny Barrios.

Solar's package will climb P168 million into the league coffers in the first year (2003-2004), P156 million in the second year and P170 million in the final year of the contract.

Solar entered overachiever in the television rights race originally composed, needing to deal only with newcomer Malaya Channel after ABS-CBN backed out of the bidding.

Reaction said the final details of the contract would be hammered out by the PBA and Solar management as well as the lawyers of both parties before presenting them to the board.

"Basically, the PBA got what it wanted," said Barrios.

"Sinasabing [like] possible change of ownership, possible change of management while they've contracted with each other will be tested out. All of those will come into play in the fine print. But assured that both parties are dealing in good faith," he added.

Meanwhile, Red Bull aims for a repeat of its first-round victory over Air21 even as Barangay Ginebra tries to remain in clinch out of the cellar in the Smart-PBA Fiesta Conference.

The Bombers possess a psychological advantage over the Express after handily defeating the latter, 102-92, the first time they met this conference.

But things have changed since then for the Express, who are now primed to do battle with the heavyweights.

Though reeling from a 97-92 setback against the Gin Kings in Bacolod on City Int'l Defender, the Express have shown the ability to bounce back after every bad performance.

The Gin Kings, already getting back on their feet with a pair of victories over the Welcoat Painters and the Express, will try to make three in a row against the inconsistent Magnolia Beverage Masters in the other game.

In contrast, the Bombers are focused on severing another loss—their third straight if it happens—that could pull them down to the middle of the pack.

"Our immediate goal is to get our energy back after the last game against Ginebra," said

CAGUIOA

BARROS

Air21 coach Bo Perasol.

A victory by the Express will tie the first four-way deadlock with the second-running Bombo and the Talk 'N Text, Phone Pals, leaving idle Coca-Cola Tigers alone at the top with a 7-4 record.

The Gin Kings (3-7) have overtaken the Dragons (3-8) deep in the standings after acquiring the 7-foot-1 Chris Alexander.

With Alexander around, the Gin Kings won three of their last five games, including Mark Caguioa's explosive 39-point game against the Tigers that finally pulled them out of the cellar.

"We have to build on the things we saw during [the] end [and believe on having a defensive mind-set," said Ginebra coach Joey Uichico.

Caguioa missed what could have been his fifth career 40-plus output and fell short of equalling Norbert Omobien's 48 points for his Lotto Realty late rendezvous. It was the highest output by a local this season.

NU eyes Filoil quarters; Champions League up

JAMES TODAY Ellen Ann, Ker Ann/
Da to — San Beda vs. NU
Ka [illegible] — Adamson vs. La Salle

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY'S BID FOR A QUARTERfinal berth will be sealed today when it takes on unbeaten San Beda College in the first Filoil Flying V Pre-Season Invitational Cup at the Araneta Coliseum.

The Bulldogs and the Red Lions collide at 2 p.m., to be followed by the remaining two-tweek quarterfinalists Adamson and La Salle at 4 p.m.

National U's (2-2) quarterfinal chances were boosted by the withdrawal of Letran College on account of the Knights are members of Philippine Basketball League Finalist Shaper Bootyguam.

Without the Knights, who defaulted their last two matches, the Bulldogs' rivals for the remaining Group A quarterfinal spot are the Jose Rizal Heavyhawks (2-4) and the San Sebastian Stags (2-4).

Meanwhile, more than 200 collegiate teams nationwide will take part in the National Collegiate Championship, a five-month event that ends with the staging of the Filoil Flying V "Super Sixteen" Final Challenge in November.

Eight teams have been seeded outright to the Finals, led by the top two UNAP and NCAA teams.

The national champion will receive a scholarship grant worth P500,000 and represent the country in next year's Universiade Games in Serbia.

The runner-up will get P300,000 scholarship grant while the third and fourth placers will receive P200,000 and P50,000, respectively. Ramchez S. Andrés

RP pulls away from Myanmar

By Ray Lauca

"BOAT RY CITY"—AFTER TWO CLOSE VICtories, the Philippines finally dumped Myanmar, 4-3-1-3, in the third round on Tuesday to pull away from Myanmar in the first 10-round Dual Meets three-team championship at the Lake Garden Hotel here.

Headlined by Bobby Open champion Grandmaster elect Jayson Gonzales and International Master candidate Rolando Nolte, the Filipinos took an imposing 11.5-6.5 edge in the 12-round event being hosted by the city government through Mayor Abraham "Bambol" Tolentino Jr.

Winning for the Philippines in the third round were Gonzales over Zaw Htun Wynn in 24 moves of the London system; Barbosa over Lin Naing Kyaw (29, Sicilian); Balbosa over Kyaw Swe Kyaw (33, Sicilian); and Bañadera over Dr.Kyaw Htay (63, French).

Nolte settled for a draw with Gbl Win Lay Daw in 62 moves of the Ruy Lopez, while Myanmar IM Aung Aung handed Reggie Quinones' undefeated setback in 33 moves of the Benko Gambit.

The Filipinos were the first two rounds of the event organized by the National Chess Federation of the Philippines under Prospero "Boyet" Pichay and secretary general Tolentino by identical 3.5-2.5 scores.

Nolte and IM-candidate Rolando Indador teamed in the second round, beating FM Lin Naing Kyaw and IM Aung Aung, respectively.

Gonzales, Barbosa and Dino Balbosa drew with their respective opponents.

SPORTSWATCH

Gov't footrace slated

AN EXCITING 10-KM FUN START/FINISH at the Quirino Grandstand will highlight the nine Government Agency Sportsfest to be staged by the Philippine Sports Commission on June 13. The race is open to employees of government agencies, according to PSC chair Butch Ramirez. Women 39 years and below will compete in the open division and those older will vie in the seniors class, for men, it's 39 and below for open class and 40 and above for seniors. PSC commissioner Ambrosio de Lima said a 5-km run is also lined up for non-competitive runners.

'Salpukan' round 2 today

A RECORD FIELD OF PARTICIPANTS DRIVES for battle today as the second round of the "Salpukan 5-cock derby" gets going at the Ribbon Coliseum's Out-Grill cockers and breeders who competed on Monday's opening round, 10 qualified for the final round after tallying two points each: Bong Garcia, Frank Cabanlit, Melvin Chanco and Bong Rubiak. The runners-up who made a guaranteed payout P1.2 million. Two more elimination rounds will be staged on June 2 and 4. The championship round cocks on June 5. Meanwhile, the "MT/Bonkerman's 7-cock derby" kicks off on June 8 and 11 with a minimum P3 million at stake. For inquiries: 8982345 and 8984753.

SJC 4-cocker gets going

MOT-PROED ENCOUNTERS ROOSTS today at San Juan Coliseum as the "Small-Time 4-cock derby" with P100,000 on the line. The event has a line-entry fee of P8,000. A board-wise match-cock will be given at bonus to the fastest win champion. Meanwhile, the "SJC 4 Tested Elite Star-Cock Derby" scores one's on May 21 with P500,000 up for the grabs for an entry fee of P3,300. With over 200 fillets it has a participants raring pot, the next will start at 9 a.m. on Saturday.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
Regional Office No. IV-A
[illegible]

May 26, 2003

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S
FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office applications for Alien Employment Permits.

Name and Address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National/Citizenship	Position
1. HYUNDAI PHILIPPINES LEARNING ACADEMY, INC. [illegible]	Mr. Hwan Kyung Sung (a/k/a Kim/ Kwhan)	General Manager
2. HONDA CARS PHILIPPINES, INC. [illegible]	Mr. Shunichi Kawaguchi	Assistant Vice President for Purchasing Department
3. HYUNDAI PHILIPPINES, INC. [illegible]	Mr. Hwang Seok Jeong/ Kenneth	Assistant Treasurer/ Manager

If you have any information/objection to the above-mentioned applications please communicate with the Regional Director.

ATTY. RICARDO D. MARTINEZ JR., CESO III
Regional Director

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Land Bank of the Philippines, invites prospective contractors/suppliers/consultants to apply for eligibility and to submit bid for the projects as detailed below:

Item / Description	Approved Budget	Bidding Documents	Deadline of Submission of Bids	Non-refundable Fee
[illegible]	[illegible]	June 5, 2003 to June 18, 2003	June 19, 2003 10:00 AM	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	June 5, 2003 to June 18, 2003	June 19, 2003 10:00 AM	[illegible]

The Bid Documents shall be available at the Procurement Department starting May 5, 2003 upon payment of a non-refundable fee as indicated above.

A Pre-bid conference will be held at Procurement Department Meeting Room, 2nd Floor, LANDBANKPlaza, 1598 M. H. del Pilar cor. Dr. J. Quintos Streets, Malate, Manila, on the date and time indicated above.

Please address inquiries to the Head Secretariat, Bids and Awards Committee, Tel. 408-3000 / 522-0000, local 2555.

LANDBANK reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award without incurring any liability to the affected bidder/s.

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

SHAKEY'S V-LEAGUE

Adamson draws first blood vs Ateneo gals

GAME TODAY (To Rizal, San Juan)
7 p.m.—UST vs Lyceum
9 p.m.—Ateneo vs Adamson

By Cedell P. Tupas, Contributor

ADAMSON'S GUEST PLAYER NERIZA Bautista found medicine to ease her team woes. And she left thrones without an antidote to her lethal combination of skill and power.

The 5-foot-10 Bautista piled up 20 points—most of them on calculated, well-placed smashes—as Adamson grabbed the franchise's in the best-of-three championship series with a 25-7, 25-14, 25-25, 25-22 triumph over former De Manila University yesterday in the Shakey's V-League Season 3 First Conference at The Arena in San Juan.

"She just had an MVP-like performance," said Adamson coach Minerva Dalis. Some of her prized recruit from Iloilo City. "Her smash performance bothered her so much that we forced her to take matchette during the game."

Born for a tentative shooting in the third set, Bautista's performance was spectacular.

The gall in quality was evident early on with the Lady Falcons scoring in a 16-3 lead on a Bautista quick play, before sealing the opening set in just 19 minutes.

And it wasn't because Ateneo, a traditional three-peater, was losing one of their most prime games. It was because the floor defense that took Adamson over the finals and the reserved sentimentalists plays underrated on the 22-year-old Bautista found all sorts of gaps on Ateneo's side.

Earlier, San Sebastian took a 1-0 lead over Lyceum in their own best-of-three series for third place with a 25-17, 19-25, 25-23 victory.

Beatrice Jacuyan garnered 23 points on 22 kills to lead the Lady Stags.

RP AMATEUR

Manotoc returns to honor Golem

By Manny R. Castillo

SAGADA—SOMETIMES WELL past his prime, Tommy Manotoc is coming out of semi-retirement to play in the Philippine Amateur championship "not for the glory," but to pay homage to a man he described as the greatest amateur to southeast Asia.

The 59-year-old Manotoc, who called it quits as a regular meet's competition during the PAL Interclub in 2004, has joined the former SP amateur field four times all today, saying that this tournament will be his own way of bidding farewell to the departed Luis "Golem" Silverio.

Silverio, the foremost golfing scroll this heading way, passed away after a long battle with emphysema two months ago, a tragedy that deeply saddened Manotoc, who played with Golem in many national teams.

"This is a tribute to Golem," Manotoc told the success to the middle of his practice round Monday at the Hiraya layout that Golem built. "I would love to play this course in a competitive atmosphere just for him because he has left such a legacy to (Philippine) golf."

Manotoc, despite his greatness, never really got the chance of being the spearhead of so many Philippine teams in the past because of the presence of Golem. But he never had any qualms playing second fiddle to that friend.

"Definitely, he's the greatest amateur in Southeast Asia, maybe even in all Asia," Manotoc continued. "No Asian amateur (in his time) ever played in the Masters twice, and qualified (for the weekend). His record will stand the test of time.

"He may have done very moments, of course, but he will forever be our greatest."

A many-time champion of this event, Silverio was the only Filipino amateur to win the Philippine Open in fin, pulling off the trick at the expense of Celestino Tagoe in 1966. He also won the Polvin Cup individual title seven times, the last four coming in a row from 1971.

Despite his retreat, Silverio refused to become a guy, saying then that it was not worth it.

Manotoc will actually be breaking two self-imposed restrictions in joining the tournament—foremost of which is the fact that he left senior meet's competition five years ago to give the younger players a chance.

And for second is his avowed dislike for the match play format as the basis for determining the Philippine champion.

"I have never believed in that (match play) format," Manotoc said. "That's why I rarely played this event, even during my prime."

But if by some stroke of fash he hop pens to reach the match play stage, "Tommy promised to compete up to the very end.

"There's no way that I can survive the same because it is 36 holes," Manotoc said before starting to smile. "It be lucky to finish 18 (holes) nothing. But if by some chance I do get there, I would gladly walk 36 holes for Golem."

TOMMY Manotoc hopes to win one more trophy, this time in honor for the man who he refers to as "our greatest."

Fernando, Tanpinco begin championship repeat bids

By Manny R. Castillo

BAGUIO—THE MARAPARA LAYOUT HAS BEEN STRETCHED TO ITS limits and the pins will be tucked in all the difficult places as a crack field vies it up today for the 2008 Philippine Amateur golf championships here.

What used to be a very short course now has some length to it as some holes have been extended so as to be back to 30 yards, making the par 72 lay-out designed by the late Jude "Golem" Silverio a tougher test to crack.

FERNANDO

TANPINCO

And with its status for the past couple of days, the fairways have remained hard, making for unpredictable bounces. The greens are also slick, posing premium on good placement of drives—not power—to be able to attack the pins.

Anthony Fernando and Dennis Tanpinco for a second consecutive title against the best amateurs in the land even as the had the hot hop flowers to especial ro basically go down to seven under par 209 to 213. Fernando—the ICTSI and the National Caddies Open programs.

Jozel Abalos, the first WCD champion and reigning low amateur of the Philippine Open, was booted to skip the event because of a prior commitment to wear the RP colors in the tough Sinquia Amateurs in Malaysia this week.

And Ilan has left RP teammate Mark Fernando and Jessie Bautista, the second winner of the WCD event, to carry the colors for the MCO, whose members also include the winner of the multi-titled Carabong squad.

Aside from Fernando, also gunning for the individual crown are the ICTSI umbrella are Teodoro Asinio, Gino Bonzi, Nedie Asinio and three paisanos who were recently recruited from the MCO program—reigning BSU champion Bayless Bayno, Joey Rivera and Peter Villaber.

Action will be strictly play for the first two days in determine rankings, before the top 32 advance to the match play stages to the meet's delt.

A similar women's classification will also be held with only the top 16 standing on.

The tournament will be held in honor of Silverio, undoubtedly the greatest amateur the Philippines has ever produced. Golem, who played in two Masters in Augusta National in the 1960s, passed away two months ago because of emphysema.

An 18-hole event for the men who won the Philippine Open twice will also be held on Friday over the very demanding course that played host to many big events in the past, like the Philippine Airlines Invitational.

Anya Sagucio, the bowling city's very own daughter, will also be shooting for a repeat, heavily favored because of her familiarity of the course where she basically learned the game.

Former RP Ladies champion Catherine Villaruz and the young Sandoval Bautista, the second placer in Baguio last year, are also entered.

POC chair: Swim woes not related to elections

By Marc Anthony Reyes

PHILIPPINE OLYMPIC COMMITTEE CHAIR Robert Aventajado yesterday said it is "unfair" to link the ongoing trouble in the Philippine Amateur Swimming Association to the upcoming POC elections.

The taekwondo chief, who was the arbitration "savior" when the swimming issue was raised in the Olympic body in 2005, said then president Irish Joseph only needs to do two things to resolve the conflict.

"It's simple, Joseph just needs to follow what was in the agreement," Aventajado told the Inquirer. "If (he) already did, then (he) must make a report to the POC."

Joseph has maintained that he has already called—and won—an election in 2005 as part of his settlement with former Pasa president Manchito Elegan, whom he replaced.

Work said he has already complied, but as in his annotated, I haven't seen any report to the POC board—unless I was absent the day (he submitted)," said Aventajado.

Joseph only replies through e-mail as he is currently abroad with scheduled participation in the International Olympic Committee events in Hungary and the United States.

"Considering that he has been running the Pasa well, then should be no problem," said Aventajado.

Aventajado, however, denied reports linking Pasa event to the POC elections where he is reported to run for the POC presidency.

"It's unfair (it doesn't mean that) just because there is an election all the POC officers will have to be held in abeyance as people won't think it's election-related," said Aventajado.

Murakami books US Open slot . . .

From page A24

The year's second major takes place at Torrey Pines, San Diego, California.

With the feat, Murakami will soon become the second Filipino to book a slot in a PGA Major.

Reigning Philippine Open champion Angelo Que also qualified for the British Open.

Murakami's success was unintended as he had to deal with a rush of Japanese media and spectators who were following his group that included Japanese teenage sensation Ryo Ishikawa, who carded a two-day total of 143.

In the first round, the bubbly 18-year-old enjoyed a bogey-free outing with three birdies on the card to end the morning session in fourth place. He soared out of the blocks in style in the afternoon's second round, shooting four birdies in his second nine.

But after the finish four in eight, a nervous Murakami dropped shots at the 15th and 17th holes to slip out of the lead. However, he steadied his nerves and produced an impressive chip to shore for a closing birdie which was enough to seal top spot with Parry.

Further sectional qualifying will be held on June 2, with 12 to be played across the United States and one in England.

—AFP

WITH a birdie in the final hole, Antonio Murakami earns a ticket to the US Open.

Becierra, two others gain quarterfinals

DANTE BECIERRA CONTINUED TO STAMP his class in the Malaysia Amateur Open match play event, blasting Mitchell Slotsch of Singapore, 7 and 6, to barge into the quarterfinal round at the Kelab Golf Bagan Sebang Club in Malaysia yesterday.

Mike Alejandro and Peter Villaber likewise travelled their respective trails to romancing fashions as the ICTSI finished here made it three-for-three in the head-to-head duels in Malaysia's premier amateur championship.

Becierra, the Hong Kong Amateur Open winner, earlier disposed of Malaysian M. Ilya Azrul, 6 and 5, and will meet Arabh Muralidhar for a spot in the semifinal round.

The Indon bar downed local bet Ahmad Shakil, 4 and 2, in their last 16 duel.

But it was Villaber who posted the biggest upset in the day as the 20-year-old shotmaker brought down Malaysia's No. 1 Nicholas Fung, 2 and 1, to arrange a quarterfinal showdown with Singapore's Rob Derksen, who beat Jason Bajunaida, 2 up.

Alejandro, on the other hand, overwhelmed Thailand's Ishpitan Bhanarun, 5 and 4, to set up a clash with Alex Fung, who nipped Hiro Fujimura, 2 and 1.

Becierra made five birdies to bust out Slotsch, while Alejandro had three in his win over Bhanarun.

Villaber banged on three straight birdies from No. 12 to oust Fung.

PAGUNSAN

ABS-CBN TV
Basketball PBA & UE Sports:
Game 4 of Eastern Conference Finals: Celtics vs. Pistons, 8 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. on AFTV

SPORTS

'Dice' lifts Pistons to series-tying win

AUBURN HILLS, MICH.—THE DETROIT Pistons provide plenty of fodder for those who want to criticize them for only playing their best when down or doubted.

Antonio McDyess doesn't.

He offers plays with the most energy on a team that traditionally pulls and flops depending on whether to up, even or behind in a series.

Playing his best game (playoff game to perhaps a decade, McDyess had 21 points and 16 rebounds to lift Detroit to a 94-75 series-evening win over the Boston Celtics on Monday night in Game 4 of the Eastern Conference finals.

The 33-year-old McDyess rejuvenated his injury-plagued career when he signed with the Pistons in 2006—shortly after they won the NBA title—and refused to let a broken nose distract his efforts to help postseason.

"You only have so many opportunities, and they're limited, especially for me," he said. "I'm at the end of my career, and I just feel like leaving everything out on the floor."

McDyess did just that, beating the Celtics to loose balls, defending them with strength and quickness and making most of his shots.

"You [as team-mates] can't ask for more than that," said Pistons guard Chauncey Billups. "You see how hard he's working, and you can't help but play hard."

Playing hard probably won't be a problem for either team on any player in the Eastern Conference finals because a loss at three series.

Game 5 is Wednesday night in Boston, then the Pistons will host Game 6 on Friday night. If necessary, the Celtics will be back in Auburn Sunday night.

Expected

Boston's Sam Cassell wasn't surprised that Pistons played the way they did.

"When you're down 2-1, you've got to be desperate," Cassell said.

The Celtics desperately need their stars to play better than they did Monday.

Boston's Big Three shot woefully as did most of the Celtics, but the NBA's top-seeded team stayed competitive for much of the game thanks to a stark disparity in free throws.

Kevin Garnett, Ray Allen and Paul Pierce combined to make their first seven shots and finished 11-for-38 from the field.

Allen said it was a disappointing performance from the trio.

"We pride ourselves on making our teammates better and allowing them to make us better," Allen said.

Garnett and Pierce both scored 16 points and Allen had 11.

Aggressive plays

"They bumped us off spots and were more physical and aggressive all night," Celtics coach Doc Rivers said. "Usually the winner is the team that was more aggressive.

"They had a no-layup rule and that's why we made it to the line so much."

McDyess led the Pistons' 'unheard' attack, going 8-of-11—mostly long jumpers.

"He's really comfortable right now," Rivers said. "We have to get him out of his comfort zone."

Richard Hamilton had 20 points, Rasheed Wallace scored 14 and Billups added 10.

Tough defense

Reserve Jason Maxiell filled in well when Wallace was in foul trouble by scoring 14 points and playing tough defense on Garnett, notably on a score from behind Maxi on a dunk attempt.

"I thought he bodied him and didn't give him anything easy," Pistons coach Flip Saunders said.

Detroit scored the first 18 points of the game and started the second quarter with an 11-2 run, but led just 43-39 at halftime.

The Celtics stayed in the game by making 17 of 20 free throws in the first half while Detroit was 5-for-8.

Boston had more points from the line (32) than from the field early in the fourth quarter when it pulled within 67-62.

Billups essentially sealed the win with a triple with just under three minutes left. AP

DETROIT Pistons' Antonio McDyess (left) and Boston Celtics' Paul Pierce scramble for the loose ball during Game 4 of the NBA Eastern Conference finals. —

Federer, Venus start Paris bids with aplomb

PARIS—ROGER FEDERER added another win to his already burgeoning slip-cover record this season.

Federer improved to 30-3 beating Juan Quinvey of the United States, 6-4, 6-4, 6-3, on Monday in the first round of the French Open, where he is trying to become only the sixth man to complete a career Grand Slam.

"I've played well all day—cover around long," said the top-ranked Swiss, 27-7 overall this year. "Didn't have many breaks really, and I have plenty of matches. That was my goal as well."

Federer came into the French Open with only one title, which he won on clay, but he has struggled this year. He never loses on more than he lost in 2003-2008 combined.

On Tuesday, Rafael Nadal was to begin his quest for a fourth straight French Open title against Thomas Bellucci of Brazil. Nikolay Davydenko, Dmitry Tursite and 2003 champion Juan Carlos Ferrero were also scheduled to play. It also entered on Sunday.

Maria Sharapova and Svetlana Kuznetsova were to play to the second in tournament.

Wimbledon showers forced delayed the start of third day action. Only 25 out of 56 first-round matches were completed on Monday before rain stopped the scrambles of the program.

No. 8 Venus Williams joined other heroes in the second round, completing her win just before play was suspended.

The eight-time Grand Slam champ beat Tatjana Oberlies of Ireland, 6-3, 4-6, 6-2. AP

ADIOS Federer chases Paris dream. AP

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BUSINESS

Editor Raul D. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Carrie S. Martinez

The BMW 3 Series. Now standard with BMW Navigation

Imports jumped 12.2% to $5.12B in March

Surging prices of oil, other commodities

By Michelle V. Remo

THE COUNTRY'S IMPORTS JUMPED 12.2 PERCENT to $5.12 billion in March from a year ago, but economists said this resulted from skyrocketing prices of oil and other commodities in the global market rather than growing demand for foreign-made goods.

This brought total imports for the first quarter of the year to $14.61 billion, up 20 percent from a year ago.

With exports earlier reported to have grown 2.7 percent to $12.94 billion, the country posted a trade deficit of $2.07 billion in the first three months. A trade deficit or surplus is the difference between the dollars entered by a country from exports and the foreign exchange spent on imports.

Imports in March rose despite the double-digit decline in imports of electronic components, which account for the bulk of the country's import and

IMPORTS /B2

ASIA-AMERICA CABLE NETWORK
President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo leads the launch on Tuesday of the Philippine leg of the $550-million Asia-America Gateway (AAG) in Barangay Bacsil, Bauang, La Union. With the President are (from left): PLDT chair Manuel V. Pangilinan, Rep. Manuel Ortega (2nd district of La Union), PLDT president Napoleon L. Nazareno, CICT chair Ray Anthony Chua, ASN Pats chief operating officer George Knotz and NEC Networks & System Integration Corp. executive SVP Hirokazu Muto. (See story on page B6.)

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Peso at 43.75:$1; BSP probes banks' forex deals

By Doris C. Dumlao

AS THE PESO CONTINUED TO falter against the dollar, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has tightened its monitoring of banks' currency deals with overseas investors in an apparent attempt to curb speculative pressure ogtthey exert on the spot foreign exchange market.

The peso yesterday closed at its intra-day low of 43.75 against the dollar, its weakest in six months, due to lingering concerns over runaway crude oil prices.

Despite repeated intervention from the BSP, which was spotted unloading dollars to temper the peso's fall, the local currency shed another 17 centavos from Monday's closing rate of 43.58 against the greenback.

Volume at the spot market Philippine Dealing System rose to $593.3 million from the previous day's $403 million.

As this developed, the BSP issued a new memorandum requiring banks to report their undisbursable forward (NDF) transactions with offshore investors on a weekly basis, including the agreed peso-dollar exchange rate, volume and the maturity of transactions.

Currency forwards refer to agreements to buy or sell a specified amount of foreign exchange for settlement at a specified rate in the future. In the case of NDFs, which played a big role behind the sharp currency swings during the Asian currency crisis, only the exchange rate differential is settled upon maturity.

At present, NDF positions are reported on a lump sum and no part of capital adequacy requirements, like starting the week ending May 23, all banks and trust entities authorized to engage in NDF transactions with nonresidents are required to submit a detailed weekly report, based on memorandum M-2008-019 issued by BSP Deputy Governor Nestor Espenilla Jr.

"They tried to control the NDF market because they realize now that it could be a threat," a bank treasurer said.

Bankers said the peso-dollar NDF market, which is done over the-counter, has been growing. Some admitted that the NDF volume transacted would increase by double or triple the daily foreign exchange positions of banks in the PDS.

Manufacturing output down 5.9%

MANUFACTURING /B2

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CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE
₱43.75 = $1
As of 5 p.m., May 27, 2008

STOCK MARKET

Stocks close higher

PHE COMPOSITE INDEX

(See stock market report on Page B4)

One of RP's largest seen to rise from bank merger

Allied Bank, PNB set to consummate union by August

By Michelle V. Rosca

CAESAR SIBAL, PRESIDENT AND CHIEF executive officer of Philippine National Bank (PNB), has expressed optimism that the proposed PNB-Allied Bank merger would sail through smoothly during their separate stockholders' meeting, both scheduled on June 24.

Mr. said shareholders of PNB and Allied Bank were expected to warmly welcome and approve the plan, which would make the emerging entity the fourth largest bank in terms of assets, and the third largest in terms of deposit liabilities and loan portfolio.

"The merger will help create a bank that has an improved overall performance and better profitability, something that is beneficial to stockholders," Mr. said in an interview with the media.

After they get the green light from stockholders in June, PNB and Allied will then work on securing the approval of regulators, including the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and the Securities and Exchange Commission, Mr. said.

"We expect to get all approvals by July and to complete the merger by August," Mr. said.

The merger of PNB and Allied Bank was proposed after the Lucio Tan group took over majority control of PNB in 2005 after the government decided to sell its stake in the institution.

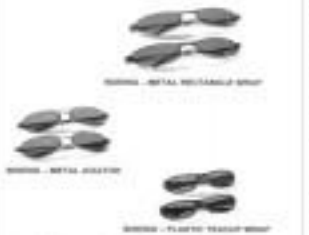
Currently, the Lucio Tan group owns 46.66 percent of PNB. The remainder is held by the public.

Because both banks are majority owned by the Lucio Tan group, officials of both banks thought it would be practical to merge the two.

Mr. said the two banks would complement each other because they have different core businesses. While Allied Bank has a client base composed of Chinese-Filipino companies and a large chunk of retail customers, PNB is strong in the middle-to-big companies, and is lending to local government units and provincial clients.

The soaring merger line also prompted PNB to buy New York Life, which was previously partly owned by Allied Bank. The insurer will take on the new corporate name PNB Life.

The Boeing Company



"Authentic Boeing Shades"

Cebu furniture makers study prospects of South African market, set trade mission

By Mari Katrina Benedicto and Irene S. Sun Cruz
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—CEBU FURNITURE EXPORTERS should look at the growing potential of the furniture market in South Africa, said Ambassador Pierre Andries Vermaak based in South Africa.

"Many South Africans have already bought Cebu-made furniture and all I needs now is more exposure," he said.

Cebu Furniture Industries Foundation (CFIF) president Eric Casas noted that the South African market prefers furniture made from wood and mixed media.

To court more buyers, Casas said CFIF was readying a pergola to exhibit Cebu's products during a furniture fair in South Africa.

South Africa, however, is looking to forge ties in other areas with the Philippines.

Vermaak met recently with the Cebu Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) and the CFIF to set where trade interests South Africa and the Philippines can be expanded.

Philippine Ambassador to South Africa Virgilio Reyes Jr. said traditional exports to South Africa include garments, housewares, holiday decorations and furniture.

The Department of Trade and Industry ranked South Africa as the country's 34th top trading partner with the Philippines enjoying a trade advantage.

In 2008, Philippine exports to South Africa reached $51.224 million while imports from South Africa amounted to $37.710 million.

Vermaak also cited the importance of developing links between the businesses of the two countries and said the CCCI's efforts to establish contacts in South Africa would indeed drive this concern.

The chamber has stated organizing a trade mission to Johannesburg and Cape Town in South Africa and Carmel de Pha Salvador, chairperson of the CCCI Johannesburg-Cape Town Business Council, urged Cebu-based companies to join the mission on Sept. 19-27 so as to provide them the opportunity to link with South African businesses.

The delegates would meet with the members of the Johannesburg and Cape Town chambers of commerce and industry for a business forum and matching session, Salvador said. They would visit shipping, cargo, furniture, food and information technology businesses in the two areas.

CCCI president Edward Gaisano earlier said that trade missions would be among the priorities of his administration.

"We will endeavor to organize more opportunities for our members to network and increase with businessmen in the international community," he said.

Ambassador Vermaak also that over the last three years, he has seen changes in the relationship between South Africa and Philippines.

"Most recently, more skilled Filipino workers are working in South Africa more South Africa is in shortage of skilled workers in the aspect of engineering and other construction works," he said.

The two countries also have a bilateral agreements to promote tourism in the Philippines.

Vermaak said the country could attract tourists from South Africa since it has good climate.

"Many South Africans are interested to diving and has not recognized Philippines yet [as a diving destination]," he added.

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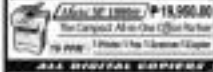

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Imports jumped 12.2% to $5.12B ...

From page B1

report figures.

Documents from the National Statistics Office showed that electronics imports accounted for $1.68 billion of the total import bill for the month, down 16.6 percent from the $2.26 billion in the same month last year.

Electronics imported by the Philippines are made up mostly of raw materials that are assembled into intermediate goods for export. These include consumer electronics such as cellular phones and laptop computers.

Compensating for the slack in electronics imports were products like oil, dairy products, cereals and transport equipments.

Benjamin Diokno, an economist from the University of the Philippines, said the lessons that the growth in imports was a doing of rising prices, especially of oil.

"The growth was more due to higher value rather than volume. The higher imports did not mean the economy was picking up because that would translate all other statistics. The growth in imports could be mainly because of the higher cost of crude," Diokno said.

Ramon de Ora readers strategist Jonathan Ravelo agreed, adding that inflation would likely push imports growth for the full year to 12 percent.

Inflation rate readings registered to June 0.4 percent in March and averaged at 5.6 percent in the first quarter. This kept the economy off track to meet the government's target of limiting the average increase in consumer prices between 3 and 5 percent this year.

The accelerated increase in consumer prices was influenced largely by surging prices of oil, which also pushed the costs of other commodities higher.

The $5B said electronics, despite posting a year-on-year decline in imports, still accounted for the biggest share of 36.8 percent of the total import bill for March.

Other imports for the month were: Mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials (which accounted for 22.8 percent or $1.17 billion of the total import bill for March), transport equipment ($524.6 million), steel ($324.6 million), organic chemicals ($221.41 million), plastics ($182.71 million), dairy products ($84.37 million), and textiles, yarns, fabrics and related materials ($71.74 million).

Displacing the United States, Singapore became the Philippines' biggest source of imports in March, accounting for $681.41 million of the total import bill.

The US was the second biggest source of imports with $603.41 million.

Japan followed with $556.66 million.

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7TH AGRARYO TRADE FAIR

Open memo to Secretary Atienza

DEAR SIR: 23, 2008: ANTONIO CERILLES, your predecessor at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, issued administrative Order 2008-23 titled, "Revised Guidelines in the Issuance of Private Land Timber Permit (PLTP) SPLTP."

I have one to grapple with this tedious act. Here, I have to navigate through your bureaucratic maneuvers.

About 35 years ago, my younger brother Rudy, who has been dead these past three years, planted some 1,000 narra seedlings over 30 hectares of his farm, located 15 kilometers from downtown Naga City up in the foothills of Mount Isarog.

The trees are now fully grown and ready to be harvested.

Being a bachelor, Rudy, who never married and had no children, left "final instructions" regarding the disposal of his estate. He was very clear on one point: The trees would have to be harvested according to law.

As the patriarch of the family, I have the duty to carry Rudy's wishes. So, last week, I went to the Bureau of Forestry in Quezon City where I had a pleasant chat with Theresa. She gave me a copy of the AO and explained the various items in a "Checklist of Requirements."

I have to file an application for a Permit to Cut in the Naga Office. In support of my application, I will have to prove Rudy's ownership and my legal personality as applicant. Not enough.

Naga Office will have to make a comprehensive inventory report, which necessarily includes a complete description of the trees. The report will also include... items in this irregular twister—"biophysical environment of area such as, but not limited to, climate, geological characteristics, hydrology, topography, soil, etc."

The report will then go up the bureaucratic ladder. To the provincial office, then to the regional office in Legaspi City. In order to justify their existences, these offices, I am sure, will find fault in the inventory report, thereby bringing the paper trail.

Finally, the papers will arrive in Quezon City where the Permit will be signed by you or your deputy.

I asked Theresa how long would the papers journey take. Her answer floored me. At least one year. One whole year to be punished so my trees that the government does not steal!

Only after the Permit is issued can I have the trees cut, transported (of course, accompanied by appropriate and relevant papers) and sold to my friendly lumber yard owners.

Certainly all that paper shuffling (I hate to call it red tape) so your officers can be run to speed up the process. After the Naga Office draws up the inventory report, the ensuing steps should merely be ministerial, if not clerical.

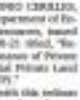
Also, I notice that the further the office is from the trees, the more authority and power it has over the project.

I grant that the act has been designed to not to a the everybody follows the law. But the tedious and tortuous process positively leads to graft and corruption that everybody is intent to avoid and prevent.

If it were not for Rudy's final instructions, I am sorely tempted to smuggle the trees out of the farm.

Finally, government does not seem to have any concept of the rules of time.

May I ask for-ward to your next filial consideration. Thank you very much. Kindly accept my sincere regards.



QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honorato C. General

Manufacturing output ...

From page B1

percent), publishing and printing (38.2 percent), petroleum (12.3 percent), fabricated metal products (11.6 percent) and electrical machinery (11.1 percent).

The decline more than offset the increases in the output of leather (68.9 percent), footwear and wearing apparel (44.8 percent), beverages (26 percent) and wood and wood products (8.2 percent).

Value of production similarly dropped 5 percent year-on-year in March, according to the NSO.

The NSO said the producers' price index, which measures the year-on-year increase in factory prices of locally produced goods, settled at 0.9 percent in March.

Average capacity utilization rate, which measures how much of the sector's production equipment was actually used, was at 80.2 percent, slightly higher than the 79.9 percent in February.

Jonathan Reveni, market strategist for Banco de Oro, said the sluggish output performance of the manufacturing sector as of March could be another sign of a slowdown in the overall economy.

The National Economic and Development Authority said the country's gross domestic product (GDP) growth was estimated at between 5.2 and 6.2 percent in the first quarter, decelerating from 7.4 percent in the fourth quarter of last year.

GDP is the value of goods produced and services rendered within an economy in a given period.

About half of the manufacturing sector's output is intended for exports, earnings for which are closely tied to the growth of the overall economy. Slower exports data adversely affect the country's GDP growth prospects.

In the first quarter, exports grew only by 2.7 percent to $11.54 billion. This kept the economy off track to meet the government's official exports growth target of 6 percent for the year. Officials earlier said exports for the year could, at best, average 5 percent.

Michelle V. Remo

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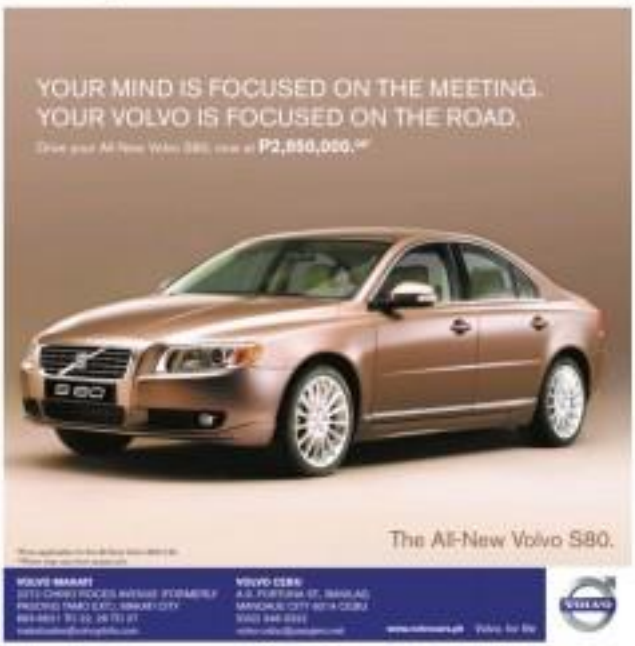

Lepanto nears $70-M deal with China mining group

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Larson

LEPANTO CONSOLIDATED MINING Co. and Zijin Mining Group Co. Ltd., China's second biggest gold miner, is finalizing an agreement that will pave the way for Zijin's possible $70-million investment in Lepanto's gold-copper project in Benguet province.

Lepanto president Bryan Yap disclosed to the stock exchange that Zijin Mining has completed its initial assessment "of the feasibility of developing the deep-seated gold-copper porphyry project in Mankayan, Benguet Province of the Southeast Gold Resources."

The Southeast is a 60-40 joint venture between Lepanto and another Chinese miner, Pacific Mining. It was formed to undertake the development of the Benguet gold-copper mine.

Zijin's possible investment will represent a 20-percent interest in the Southeast should agreement be finalized.

Security Bank sees 10% profit growth

By Doris C. Dumlao

SECURITY BANK CORP. EXPECTS A 10-percent growth in net profit this year despite a more difficult operating environment.

"Oil price increases and global food supply concerns have tempered the outlook for the Philippine economy with GDP (gross domestic product) projections of 6 percent versus last year's 30-year high of 7.3 percent. This will therefore be a more challenging year for Philippine companies," SBC president Alberto Villarosa said during the bank's annual stockholders' meeting yesterday.

In a briefing after the meeting, bank chief finance officer Carlos Bautista said about 60 percent of the bank's revenues this year would come from interest earnings, although lending would likely expand at a much slower pace.

"It's a tough environment. Banking and settlement regional shake-up is the environment, we should be able to maintain the first-quarter level of a 15-percent growth (in income)," Bautista said.

Based on this guidance, the bank aims to net about P5.197 billion this year from last year's P4.7 billion.

SBC was among the few banks that defied the downturn in earnings seen by the banking industry during the first quarter.

However, Bautista said the 10-percent growth is lower to P5.2 billion net this year could not be replicated due year. He said the bank was looking at a growth in lending of only 10 percent for 2008.

"We see opportunities for credit expansion. Even borrowers' standpoint, they still want to push longer tenure," he said, likewise noting there was still a lot of liquidity available for lending. He said there were areas where there were relevant opportunities for lending even when interest rates were higher.

Unlike other banks which were part of big conglomerates, Bautista noted that the bank would have to be more prudent, when asked whether it would like to expand through the acquisition of other banks.

"We have no subsidiaries that will give an profits while our attention is on something else. That's why we have to be very very careful what we do that," he said.

DEADLINE OF THE TENDER OFFER TO SHAREHOLDERS OF KEPPEL PHILIPPINES MARINE, INC. (FORMERLY KEPPEL SHIPYARD, INC.)

Please be advised that KE Investments Pte. Ltd.'s Tender Offer (TO) to all shareholders of Keppel Philippines Marine, Inc. (KPMI) to acquire 8.6% or 155,139,216 common shares of KPMI at the price of P4.65.50 per share ends at 4:00 p.m. today, 28 May 2008. KE Investment's shareholdings in KPMI is at 84.9% of the outstanding shares as of 27 May 2008. These include shares that have been tendered and accepted under the TO. Tendered shares are intended to be crossed on the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) on 10 June 2008 subject to PSE approval. Payment for the tendered and accepted shares will be made on 12 June 2008. Interested shareholders may communicate with ATR-Kim Eng Securities, Inc., 17th Floor, Tower One & Exchange Plaza, Ayala Avenue, Makati City. Tel. No. (632) 8404888 (Contact Person: Sally Dela Cruz)

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BIR to audit all '07 tax returns

By Michelle F. Remo

IN AN ATTEMPT TO MEET THE government's tax collection target for the year, Revenue Commissioner Lilian Hefti has ordered an audit of all 2007 returns using the so-called "industry benchmarking" method.

The audit will cover both corporate and individual taxpayers.

Revenue Memorandum Order No. 20-2008 stipulates the guidelines for tax audits using industry benchmarks on tax payment-to-sales ratios.

Under the industry benchmarking method, the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) will come up with threshold levels on the tax payment-to-sales ratios are reviewed. A taxpayer whose payment falls short of the standard income-tax-to-gross revenues ratio, for instance, will have to be subjected to a full-scale audit.

The standard ratios differ on a per-industry and per-profession basis.

"From the results of the benchmarks established, the investigating officer shall draw a list of taxpayers for the issuance of LAs [letters of authority] and TVNs [tax verification notices] for those whose tax compliance is below the normal or minimum benchmark for the industry/profession," Hefti said in the memorandum.

LAs are issued to tax personnel who are asked to conduct tighter audit of returns of certain taxpayers. TVNs are issued to the taxpayers concerned, informing them that their returns would be subjected to tighter audit after the benchmarking method revealed that they did not meet standard ratios of tax payment to revenues.

Hefti also said in the memorandum order that the audit would also focus on verifying the computation of taxpayers' dues, the validity of claims for income tax holidays and tax credits, and accuracy in computing allowable deductions from taxable income, among others.

The BIR is tasked to collect P860 billion in taxes this year, in line with the government's aim of posting a balanced budget.

Being the government's biggest source of revenue, the BIR is hard-pressed to meet its tax-collection target. This year's target is 10.5 percent higher than its goal of P765.9 billion last year.

Revenue order will cover both corporate, individual taxpayers

Broadband gateway seen to stimulate RP industries

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE $250-MILLION Asia-America Gateway (AAG) will spark further growth in broadband among BPOs, call centers and other so-called outsiders industries that depend on advanced telecommunications services, the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) said.

Also, AAG is seen to provide added protection from disruptions such as the 2006 earthquake with 7.1 magnitude that caused massive service interruptions of telecommunications services to corporate and retail customers across the region.

The country's largest telco said that the 20,000-kilometer long fiber optic cable network will connect Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei Darussalam, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the US West Coast.

Of the $550-million total cost, PLDT pledged to $50 million to put up a cable landing station in La Union for the Philippine leg of the AAG system. The project is expected to carry international traffic early next year.

The Philippine leg of the AAG cable system landed in La Union on Tuesday.

THIS 1957 MGA roadster has a robust 1.5-liter 4-cylinder engine with twin carburetors.

MOTORING

E-mail: pi_motoring@inquirer.com.ph

Edie Cesar D. Mangamang

The XKE was selected as 'the world's most beautiful automobile.'

Appreciating sports cars, old and new

Text and Photos by Aida Sevilla Mendoza

(First of two parts)

YOU MAY LOVE SPORTS cars but can you afford even one? I can't, so it was by a stroke of good luck that I met someone who owns not only three or five, but nine sports cars, old and new.

Here are the fabulous nine: four Porsche sports cars (an ivory 1955 Spyder, a champagne yellow 1955 Super Speedster, a cobalt blue "turbo look" 1980 911 Carrera coupe, a speedster yellow 2003 Boxster), two XK Jaguars (a black 1967 XKE roadster and a British racing green 1997 XK8 convertible), a silver 1999 Ferrari 355 F1 Spider and a British racing green 1957 MGA roadster.

THIS 1999 Ferrari 355 F1 Spider zooms from 0 to 100 kph in 4.6 seconds.

APPRECIATING OLD...

PORSCHES present: a 2003 Porsche Boxster and a 1985 Porsche 911 Carrera

PORSCHES past: a 1955 Porsche Spyder and a 1955 Porsche Super Speedster

X-TRAIL

NISSAN

NISSAN MOTOR PHILIPPINES, INC.

NISSAN TEST DRIVE

An open letter to Carlos Ghosn

MY DRAFT

André Pabico

FIRST CONGRATULATIONS ON your promotion as a respected leader in the automotive and automobile industry. Second, I wish that Ford can restore its lost superiority. Turning around the worldwide operations of Nissan is possibly one of the greatest feats in the history of men making the automobile. You did that as an outsider, a gaijin at first, and now you have a Japanese nation character in your likeness to deal with it.

Everything you seem to do is done in boldness: Investing the 920 Nissan GT-R, the spirit and successor of the Skyline, to the driving world last year in Tokyo; slide the chess for all to see in your recent Bombay chess, often in color photos with the rest of the world's motoring press, even our humble council for you obviously noticed. I was there in the Godzilla-fuelled month yet and have many flashes photos filled with other journalists' heads and shoulders to prove it.

Considerably risky

Your statements at Davos this year were typically for those two-key as well. Stirring Renault's and Nissan's futures on electric vehicles is considerably risky. Add to that the pledge that your electric car will be fun to drive and provide a significant economic advantage over the internal combustion engine, I imagine the anticipation for this landmark endeavor, especially when (1) the CEO of world's fourth largest automotive conglomerate doing the talking, (2) the superlative since Lindy Hburn spoke those words himself.

It would take a lot of unparalleled significance to pull this off. Your electric vehicle will have to go beyond the Model T, the Initial Prius and Nation Tido's overture in autonomous minimalism, the passenger Nissan. There are some serious benchmark flaws, Mr. Ghosn.

Like say other car

The Renault-Nissan electric vehicle would have to look, feel and smell like any other car. On typical floor, people will have to be convinced that somehow, your's is better. It is only after these requirements have been surpassed that the real powerhouse be pulled, "and oh, by the way, it's electric." Don't forget also that your electric vehicle will have to be affordable, hardening as characteristic cheap. Good luck, you'll need it.

Pushing and selling such a success is beyond my imagination. Having driven the technology demonstrators of the other players in the industry, it seems like mere modest acceptable, alternative energy vehicles are, at the very best, still a decade and a half away. It seems to take a dozen guys to lift-carry to keep those kinds of vehicles running, even on just a test track. How can this be practical in any sense of the word?

Thankfully, it appears as though I'm mistaken. In another surprising statement that sets ground for the possible work, your car of the future seems to already be in the here and now.

Mass-market product

"We are not interested in some 'Blue Stars' prototype, but in bringing a mass-market product that everybody can buy. It is a zero-footprint in the life of this industry," you said, encouraging Japan to introduce zero-emission electric vehicle in the United States and Japan by 2010 (Tino Magadia, Reuters, May 24, 2007).

Great news for the developed world, but are in the poverty-stricken third world need this product just as badly. While most of our power generation is still fossil-fuel fired, a recharging and practical purely electric vehicle will point us in the right direction at the very least.

When the three-cornered thing, reasonable methods of generating electricity becomes readily available to us, the electric car will all but wipe out the emissions that are responsible for that pollutant on the world's misery. The impact of the US$25 price of oil per barrel already has the potential for creating societal chaos in the third world of unthinkable proportions. Imagine what will happen when true oil scarcity hits.

Please don't keep us waiting, Mr. Ghosn. You of all people should understand that bold moves, toward perfection can overcome established tradition and stubborn status quos. What's at stake here is greater than the tension used at Nissan, more spectacular than the rebirth of the world—hunting Japanese super car genre. The opportunity to redefine the automobile is at hand. Saving the world is the prizes will look good on your resumé as well.

MotorScope

RUNNING MATE: Pampanga's Nissan son (from left) GTO Region 3 Assistant Director Jesse Virag, Vice Mayor Edwin Santiago, Manila Managing Director David Mercado, Mayor Oscar Rodriguez and Manila-Pampanga dealer principal Rolando Ballo.

Toyota Driving Tomorrow Journalism Awards now open for submission of entries

IN LINE WITH THE CELEBRATION OF ITS 2007 anniversary this year, Toyota Motor Philippines Corp. announces its very first photo-journalism contest open to all members of the media.

The contest aims to award excellence in automotive journalism that is dedicated to promoting accurate and interesting information about the motoring scene and its role in moving the Philippines society forward. Attractively crafted to stir discussion and encourage debate.

Consisting of two categories, the print-and-online category and the video category, the contest aspires to reach majority of the print-online platforms including magazine, newspaper, Web and television. Entries could be written in Filipino and other local dialects. In addition, participants may submit as many entries for both categories.

This effort of reaching out to diverse bases is part of Toyota's vision on bringing another milestone of being in the market for two decades. As it remembers its rich past, Toyota also anchors on the principle of driving tomorrow with the development of a progressive future in mind—not only with its products but also with its other aspects of operations.

All entries will be judged according to the following criteria: 25 percent for originality, 25 percent for story, 15 percent for impact, 10 percent for relevance, and 10 percent for technical and contest compliance. Entries could be submitted from May 15 to July 30 and have to be published within the said timeframe. For both categories, there will be three top placers and three consolation winners.

All legitimate members of the media are to practice the Toyota Driving Tomorrow Awards and continue to observe objective and insightful articles. Complete contest rules, guidelines and the application form are now available at www.toyota.com.ph.

Mazda Pampanga opens

MAZDA LOVERS UP NORTH SO LOOK OUT FOR THE all the way to Manila as Mazda Philippines recently opened its satellite branch in San Fernando, Pampanga. The sophisticated hatchback by Mazda might whistle and elegance for Pampanga's elite. The motorcycle repair was ably led by San Fernando Mayor Oscar S. Rodriguez and formally by Vice Mayor Edwin Santiago.

Located on San Fernando-Gapan Road, Mazda Pampanga was launched with a satellite showroom where test drivers can be arranged and prospective buyers can be advised about Mazda's car financing plans.

A large mass turnout is being constructed in Block Nine Highway in Balili, San Fernando, and will be ready by September. The most dealership brand near Angeles City will have a complete service and parts center and its service bay will be the largest area among all Mazda dealerships.

Mazda Pampanga's presence is in response to the growing interest for Mazda's innovative lines known for its performance and styling, popularly dubbed the Zoom-Zoom spirit. Also as Pampanga can be reached through (045) 961-0000 or visit www.mazda.com.ph.

Goodyear awarded as Mitsubishi's outstanding supplier

LEADING TIRE MANUFACTURER GOODYEAR Philippines Inc. was recently honored as one of the 2007 Top Outstanding Parts Suppliers of Mitsubishi Motors Philippine Corp.

The awardees were selected for excellent performance in areas tied closely to MMPC's key business drivers including safety, quality, cost, customer service and productivity.

A certificate was likewise awarded to Goodyear for "Product Excellence," citing the company's compliance with MMPC's quality standards and consistent delivery of high-quality products from July to December 2007. It entitled Goodyear to the privilege under MMPC's "Smaller Shipment-Need Payment" scheme over six months, which means all the parts to be supplied by Goodyear to MMPC will be free of charge.

"This second recognition is another milestone for us at Goodyear affirming our position among the best suppliers locally and globally. It not only validates our commitment to continuous improvement and quality, it motivates our dedication to a long and meaningful business relationship with MMPC as well," Goodyear Philippines President and Managing Director Dean Martin said.

Jacob came value. Goodyear aggressively promotes safety through various projects across Asian areas—road and driver safety, environmental safety, and we Kaizen safety.

Being awarded by the MMPC is among the recognitions of excellence in quality and customer satisfaction received by Goodyear from its customers. Earlier this year, Goodyear was given the Kaizen in the Employees' Choice Award for the driving force that made it possible for Goodyear to achieve these recognitions.

"With their individual and combined efforts, Goodyear was able to satisfy MMPC's strict service standards. Our success highly validates our company, has also motivated our dedication to excellence and continually improve the quality of our products and service," Mirete said.

Appreciating sports cars, ...

From page B3-1

Spider, a silver 1972 Mercedes-Benz 450 SL hardtop/soft top, a white 1997 MGA roadster and a black 2003 BMW Z4 roadster.

Unfortunately, the photo session we conducted allowed me no photograph his cherished collection. All the older sports cars (1950 to 2000) are perfectly restored and in good running condition, with five having been acquired in California and shipped to Manila. The first I was purchased in only three years ago while the rest were—the 2003 Porsche Boxster and the 2003 BMW Z4—were bought here.

I asked the sports car collector which of the nine he would choose if he were stranded to keep only one. "The Jaguar XKE," he immediately answered. If I were in his place, I would make the same choice. Unveiled at the 1961 Geneva Auto Show, the XKE was later selected by the New York City Museum of Modern Art as "the world's most beautiful automobile."

More on the XKE and 2003 next week. Due to space constraints—and with the kind indulgence of my editor—I will divide this lesson into an ignite cars cold and now into four parts: this today pictorial is Part 1, the next Jaguars is Part 2, the four Porsches in Part 3 and the Ferrari in Part 4. Each of the next three parts will have new photos.

OLD and new: a black 2003 BMW Z4 roadster with a white 1997 MGA roadster; a 1955 Porsche Spyder and a 1953 Ferrari Super Speed are caption.

TWO Jaguars: a 1967 Jaguar XKE 4.2-liter roadster and a 1997 XKE convertible

THIS 1972 Mercedes-Benz 450 SL hardtop/soft top was the collector's first classic car.

The pleasure of the open road

BMW MAE ADVOYS BMW 1995 experience with direct driving and riding pleasure. As such, it's no surprise that BMW Philippines celebrated the launch of the new Subic-Clark Turbo Experience (SCTex).

The latest highway, which spans nearly 100 kilometers, opens up vehicle destinations in Northern Luzon by cutting travel time significantly while providing motorists with safer open roads and superior driving conditions.

In the days prior to the public opening of the new SCTex, BMW joined the Bases Conversion Development Authority and the Clark Development Authority for the bike Weekend.

This three-day series of exciting events featured fun drives and rides with the BMW Car Club and the BMW Owners' Society of Subic-Clark (BOSS), as well as a premium BMW display which showcased the latest BMW cars, motorcycles and lifestyle items.

The weekend's main ride-build in line with the International Convention of the Union Motorcycle Federation, which brought together thousands of riding enthusiasts and biker groups from all over the world.

The joy of the open road was not limited to just the motorcycle riders, as there were also a fair share of adrenaline-pumped motion on the highway over the weekend. This was due to the stunning and cycling enthusiasts, who showed tremendous stamina by running or biking various distances on the SCTex.

With the Subic-Clark-Turbo Experience now open to the public, travelers heading north can look forward not only to the destination, but to a pleasurable ride to and as well. The 94K Weekend was organized by Motor Mirror and supported by BMW, Control, the Luzon Motorcycle Federation, Inc. and Magic 89.9 FM.

BMW PRESIDENT Andreas Bohler carves the curve in dynamic fashion.

VEHICLES equipped with an all-wheel drive system offer a much-improved traction.

GENERAL Motors launched new turbo diesel versions of the Chevrolet Captiva on the Philippine market.

GM has perfect SUV in the diesel Chevy Captiva

Text and photos by Charles E. Bukar

IN THE WAKE OF RISING gasoline prices, buying a diesel-powered vehicle may just seem to make perfect sense.

This notion did not escape General Motors when it launched a turbo-diesel version of the Chevrolet Captiva on the Philippine market.

GM Philippines has in fact placed its showrooms two variants of this sport utility vehicle—a P1.399 million two-wheel drive and a P1.699 million all-wheel drive. Both are powered by 2.0-liter CRDI turbo four-number diesel engines that produces 148.5 horsepower (at 4,000 rpm) and 310 Nm (at 2,000 rpm) of torque.

With only the automatic transmission available, GM made sure it's the most responsive, making a 5-speed Tiptronic type that provides drivers with the convenience of an automatic with the sporty precision of a stick shift.

Big attraction

But the big attraction is, of course, the vehicle's claimed 13.82 kilometer per liter

FOR AN S.U.V., the Chevrolet Captiva's big attraction is its commendable fuel efficiency.

(combined) fuel consumption. For an SUV, this is already significant.

This writer was even more impressed with the Captiva when the diesel all-wheel drive version it recently drove registered an average 10 km/L.

As you can see, while vehicles equipped with an all-wheel-drive system offers a much improved traction (whether for performance or during slippery and off-road conditions), it usually suffers from having a not so good fuel-efficiency rating.

This was somehow addressed by the all-wheel-drive Captiva since its system could operate with only the rear from wheels during normal driving conditions.

But when this system identifies a situation where four wheels would be better than two, the all-wheel drive system will take over to transfer power to the rear wheels in proportions ranging from 50:50 and 60:40 to 70:30 depending on the situation.

Exceptional

Riding comfort is also exceptional. The cabin is filled with crossure comforts like seats that hug a diverse range of body shapes, as well as the head restraints, resulting you as you roll along.

All controls are within comfortable reach of the ergonomically adjusted driver's seat, putting the person at the wheel in charge.

In addition to its roomy comfort, the Chevrolet Captiva's interior was thought fully designed to emphasize its relaxing nature. Aluminum accents are used to highlight the door handles, center part of the dashboard and the steering wheel.

Other nice touches include the storage in front of the passenger seat that uses cool air from the air conditioner to keep refreshments chilled throughout long drives.

The Captiva is also equipped with rain-sensor wipers that adjust the speed of the blades automatically to match the volume of rain hitting the windshield. In an added convenience, the hood lamps also shut off automatically moments after the engine is turned off and the key is removed, and will turn on again when the doors are unlocked by remote control.

Indeed, with almost a century of experience in car-making (and SUVs for almost 70 years), Chevrolet has shown that passion clearly makes perfect, and the Captiva, reportedly on diesel-fed variant is a case in point.

'Clash of the Titans'

From page B2-4

system of the Filipino salesmen, and initially focused its distributorship efforts on the Hyundai Starex to identify Hyundai with robust unique in the Filipino family.

With its spacious build, comfy interior package, a sleek and motivated figure as well as a unique bullet-nosed front styling, the Hyundai Starex design immediately stood out from the usual boxy passenger vans that previously dominated the market.

In no time, Hyundai Starex attracted the Filipino consumer's confidence to the Hyundai brand, as it continued to improve the durability, versatility and rugness of Filipinos' life through its innovative design platforms.

With its expansive interior, the Hyundai Starex represented the Filipino family's bigger-than-life adventures, hosting close family ties with space big enough to accommodate more extended kin and lifestyle pros.

The Hyundai Starex has undeniably gained a huge following among Filipino motorists and the love affair that ensued is one that has elevated from mere admiration to great esteem as translated by a significant upward trend in sales for the Starex over the years.

With its consistent drive to introduce more upmarket models and cater to more style and performance conscious segments of the market, Hyundai furthered the design of the Starex to highlight strength of character, personality and functional styling, and class-leading performance, safety and comfort. The results is the Grand Starex—a testament of Hyundai's legendary entry in the automotive market, celebrating the dynamism, excitement and distinctiveness of Filipino culture and the special bond inherent in Filipino families.

Price, size

The Urvan Estate van unit—the oldest among the three cost models at 19,800 km (the Toyota Super Grandia had logged in about 3,000 km, and the Hyundai Grand Starex about 12,000 km)—was the only manual transmission among the three. It also had the biggest engine displacement at 3,953 cc. It is equipped with the same family of engines as that of the Patrol Super Safari—the powerful 3.0-liter direct injection 2RZ engine.

ENDURANCE runs at Toliara Barangay for Super Grandia, Urvan Estate and Grand Starex

The Estate also has the lowest priced among the three units tested at P1.550 million, followed by the Grand Starex at P1.630 million (with 6 variants in varying prices) and the Super Grandia at P1.790 million. Universal Motors Corp., Nissan's exclusive distributor in the Philippines, showed no loses, however, of a significant model change for the Estate in the offing.

The Toyota Hiace Super Grandia is powered by a 2,494-cc direct injection, 4-stroke Common Rail Diesel engine (D-4D). Its four-cylinder in-line, 16-valves, electronic fuel injection, double over head camshaft, turbo engine gives it the power to haul the biggest body among the three.

The Hyundai Grand Starex, on the other hand, is powered by a 16-valve 2.5-liter (2,497 cc in its owner's CRDi (common rail direct injection) 4VIT double overhead camshaft.

The Grand Starex's VGT is the next generation in turbocharger technology that allows for optimum air intake to its continuous flow of dense air into the engine that will yield better combustion for enhanced power delivery and engine efficiency.

Hyundai engineers engineered the unit by utilizing variable vanes to direct exhaust flow into the turbocharger turbine. VGT maximizes the use of exhaust gas by contacting vanes at the right angle, thereby optimizing their position to suit a particular engine condition.

At low rpm, the VGT's vane geometry is slightly closed to increase exhaust velocity, which imparts maximum energy in the turbine. This action causes the turbocharger to spin faster, forcing air into the combustion chamber to provide a quick speed up of power, thus, providing better acceleration even at low rpm. While at high speeds, the variable vanes of the VGT become fully open to regulate exhaust velocity, unleashing the engine's maximum power for demanding road conditions.

The result: optimum engine performance is achieved in any rpm range for better fuel mileage and all-around dynamic performance. Toxic or NOX (nitrogen oxides) emissions are also reduced due to better combustion of fuel supported by optimum air intake.

Power and torque

With its second generation CRDI engine integrated with VGT, the Grand Starex is evidently more powerful than its predecessors. For its 2.5-liter engine displacement, it churns out a massive maximum power output of 125 kW or 170 ps at 3,800 rpm and maximum torque of 392 Nm or 40 kg-m at 2,000 to 2,500 rpm.

That's surprisingly giving since you usually get that kind of power in similar vehicles that have much bigger engine displacements.

THE GRANDEST MPV OF ASIA - COMING IN JUNE

Nissan's new Grand Livina is taking Asian markets by storm.

Every market it has been launched, the all-new MPV enjoyed Vehicle from Nissan is outshining other models in its various segment.

The Nissan Grand Livina was specially crafted at the Nissan Technical Center in Atsugi, Japan for the Asian market. Penned by Nissan's best design team at the Nissan Design Center, the Grand Livina joint together two world MPV qualities with the compact seamlessness and performance of a sedan. This provides what Nissan calls

per month leading to a 2007 year-end tally of almost 15,000 units sold. This one single model topped the sales of Nissan Motors Indonesia (NMI) to hold to 2007 sales target at a time when the total number of brand new cars sold in the country was on a downswing.

In December 2007, Malaysia introduced the amazing Nissan model. Barely two months after launch, Edaran Tan Chong Motor (ETCM), Nissan's Malaysian assembler and distributor has already received more than 10,000 orders and reservations for the Nissan Grand Livina.

In Taiwan, where it was launched less than 5 months ago, the Grand Livina sent its many compact-sliding the Livina accounted for a total of 1,000 units per month sales for Nissan.

"We are aiming to launch this vehicle by mid-June in the Philippines, but already inquiries are pouring into our dealers," comments Alex Chan, President of Nissan Motor Philippines Inc. "This shows that we made our decision right in creating orders of the new Grand Livina earlier than we expected."

Soon, the many generation Filipino family will know and experience how it is to live the grand life, the more grand as the Nissan Grand Livina in the Philippines, please visit www.grand-livina.com.ph.

ADVT.

'Clash of the Titans'

Nissan Urvan Estate turned out to be the most economical for the run

Text and photos by Rene R. Salazar
(First of three parts)

THE FAMILY HAULERS OF Toyota, Hyundai and Nissan go head-to-head for six hours. What a joyride!

Times like these, Supreme Measuring Signs, it's better to load everyone in and save more bucks gold in the process. But which people hauler on Philippine streets does a better job at it? We managed to borrow the Toyota Hiace Super Grandia, Hyundai Grand Starex and the Nissan Urvan Estate—all 12-seater diesel-powered vans—and gave them a spin through the twists and uphills of Laguna, Cavite and Batangas.

With a total of just four people per vehicle (it was impossible to "load" more since it was a regular working day), the ride originated from Sta. Rosa City, along the Sta. Rosa-Tagaytay highway, where the vehicles were filled up with fuel.

The vans were driven up to Tagaytay City on moderate Wednesday traffic, then proceeded to Brgy. Maria in Silang, Cavite, then back to Tagaytay to the horseback riding field. Afterward, the convoy went down to Talisay on Taal Lake (light traffic), back up again to Tagaytay City, then back to Sta. Rosa for the refill.

The 2.5-liter Hyundai Grand Starex, logging 96.2 km in its city stints, consumed 13.61 liters for a fuel mileage of 7.4 km per liter.

For the 2.5-liter Toyota Super Grandia which logged in 97.7 km, it consumed 13.55 liters for a fuel mileage of 7.2 km per liter.

The most economical for this run turned out to be the 2.5-liter Nissan Urvan Estate, which logged in 98.2 km in its city stints, consuming 9.95 liters for a fuel mileage of 9.9 km per liter.

The duration of the trip was approximately six hours (2 p.m. to 8 p.m.).

FUEL: Consumption runs at Seaoil Sta. Rosa, Laguna

No toasters, just spacious coasters

How did these mega people haulers come to be, in the first place?

Nissan recognized the need for a bigger van than its Urvan Escapade, thus the Urvan Estate was born. The former caters to the more discriminate taste of the family van market that requires additional space for both passengers and cargo. Since the Estate's market intro in 2003 up to 1Q07, a total of 1,103 units had been sold. In 2008 alone, Nissan sold 181 Estates (as of April).

Hiace was Toyota's first cab forward van introduced in 1967. Its name is a combination of High (for high performance), and Ace (meaning hard worker). Since its introduction, Toyota says that its Hiace has not only been a "high end cargo van," but also a "high quality commuter." Since its introduction, it has sold over 3.76 million units to over 130 countries (since 2003 no available updated data as of yesterday).

In the Philippines, the Hiace was launched in 1994. The current Hiace model was introduced in 2005, with minor changes in 2006. This came in three variants (Commuter, GL Grandia and Super Grandia). Since its introduction, Toyota Motors Philippines has sold a total of 23,735 units (from 1994 to April 2008).

As of April of 2008, TMP sold a total of 823 Hiace units (the new Super Grandia 331 units, new GL Grandia at 264 units, New Commuter at 201 units and the Old Commuter at 1 unit).

The Hiace is used most commonly by shuttle operators, government agencies, private companies, and individuals coming from upper Class 4 economic class, the businessminded or family-oriented individuals who look for practical/economical vehicles.

Meanwhile, the Starex gained popularity in the '90s when the "grey" or secondhand market first introduced it in the Philippines.

In 2001, an official and exclusive distributorship for the vehicle and other Hyundai vehicles was granted to Hyundai Asia Resources Inc. Hari looked within the value

RAMA MO

THESE are no giant roosters, only spacious crossovers.

24/7 LIFESTYLE
Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan
Chief of Correspondents Pam Pastor

If you don't have a Gisele Bundchen body, can't marry a Zobel or Gokongwei, how do you go the distance?

Becoming a better version of ourselves is hard work of Olympian proportions and striving of Himalayan heights

By Margie D. Collas (English)
24/7 Contributor

DEAR GRADUATE,

Before me, under a gleaming sky, were expectant and giddy young women in caps and gowns...on enthusiastic collection of talent and ambition, only enough intellectual horsepower to change a corner of the universe or change the world. My [illegible] expression was peppered with words like "take the day" and "fulfill our promise and potential." Touched me. The power of hopes, not to oneself, he said, that the school be a way of my ambitious speech to plumbs for his next sentence.

I clutched to my head a letter from my boyfriend. "Tonight the stars will be out in force to cheer you on. As I will be," it began. "Tomorrow our work begins, for much is demanded of those to whom much has been given." He always did have a way with words, and late my heart, and yes, he went on to become a master of the universe.

More didn't quite know what to make of my prospects, except hold a wish in her heart for my happiness and life's gains. It was obsolete—this happiness—and stirred precariously on the surrender secretes of my own ambitions. And was unsure. Live life in the imperative, he exhorted, with a multitude of exclamation marks! Raise your life's quotient, he said, and lift the list of your expectations! Be a better version of yourself!

If you're not in clover and didn't inherit it, if you weren't born with Gisele Bundchen's good looks and a prime quasi body, if you can't marry a Zobel de Ayala or a Gokongwei, going the distance demands sacrifice of the kind that drives us beyond ourselves.

Becoming a better version of ourselves is hard work of Olympian proportions and striving of Himalayan heights. You secured enough in the reserve of your life that its failure would not cost you happiness or your peace of mind. You can't run away or hide from yourself. Success has a monumental fallout, but failure is an orphan. Just ask Gavin Tan.

Twelve up next day weighed down by a heavy freight of expectations. I would have the best of the average. I knew my purpose, but there was no road map.

Lifetimes later, age has come with some experience and knowledge. "There's only one thing wrong with the younger generation, Bernard Baruch said. A lot of us don't belong to it anymore. Let me share three with you:

1 Education is different from intelligence. Throughout our lifetime. There will always be people cleverer than us. Education doesn't end with graduation. It's not a destination, but a process of learning, all up time. We have more information three days, but less knowledge.

Arm yourself with the tools of a well-equipped life—books, philosophy, newspapers, conversation. Go back to school, if you must, opt for engineering, the sciences, over leather. Equip yourself with useful skills. Cultivate a habit of mind and thinking lovers for success as well as for pleasure.

2 Or, your's ambition count be so small as to be almost on a petty swell, pass the English growth. A large and consuming ambition is an overbearing, like a fire that guides you out of the darkness into the light. Have ambition, as if your life depended on it. Let your reach exceed your grasp. One day it will be a pleasure to look at Fifty years pass in retrospect. Hobed successes or Olympic supremacy.

3 We're never upside in the universe know your self—your strengths, weaknesses, hopes, dreams. Possess as the grammar of your life with charm, humor, curiosity about the world, interest in others.

4 Fabulous hard work—if it's worth it FOR DON'T DO

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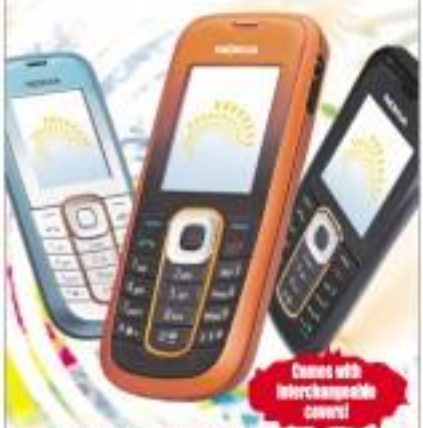

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Sizzle In Stunning Summer

10 hot fashion tips to turn your summer style from drab to fab

Summer is fast coming to a close. So make the most of your time to enjoy fun under the sun with these helpful style tips that are sure to create a splash!

TIP # 1: Get down to basics. No matter what the trend is, golf shirts will always remain a staple. Add a twist to your fave basic tee to give this preppy look a fashion-savvy appeal. How about golf tee (P750) and animal print shorts (P880) both from Plains & Prints.

TIP # 2: Have fun with colors. Infuse playful hues into your wardrobe! Not only will it set your mood, it'll also bring out that youthful spirit in you within! Glorietta suggests: K&C's printed dress (P1,550).

TIP # 3: Go light and breezy. Always opt for light fabrics that provide ease and comfort. At Gap Glorietta, slip into the cool comforts of their woven tee set (P1,250).

TIP # 4: Opt for the sleek yet sassy look. Summer nights are never without parties. Come dashing in a halter maxi dress by Cristalo at The Ramp (P1,595).

TIP # 5: Stand out. Not as keen on wearing a bikini? Don't fret. there are many bathing suit options that are equally sexy and flattering. Highlight those curves with a printed Marks and Spencer printed one piece bathing suit (P2,900).

TIP # 6: Step up your game. Put your best foot forward with must-have footwear. What to look for? Comfort! And of course, style! For flip-flop needs, try Malibo scented slippers (P750). Looking for something dressier, check out Gap's Bong sandals (P1,990). Or set your foot into these ultra-comfy Gap sneakers (P2,250).

TIP # 7: It's a to the bag! Accessorize with the perfect summer totes. The bigger, the better. You'll need an ample space to pack up all those summer must- haves! Try Gap's classic striped tote (P1,650) or the chic makeup bag from The Ramp (P1,995).

TIP # 8: Make it work! Whether you're wearing a relaxed round tee like this Regatta roundneck tee (P545), a stylish tank top like these cabin tanks by Plains and Prints (695), board or boy shorts, the trick to feeling and looking fashionable is to make sure your fashion reflects you. And not the other way around.

For fashion finds, head on over the Glorietta for a wide range of choices perfect to spruce up your summer gear. All items are available at the Kids and Tweens, Glorietta.

It feels like teen spirit at Glorietta

r Styles

Their Project? The Runway!

The Glorietta 1 merchants recently hosted a fashion show that featured their latest summer lines.

Entitled Summer Trends Fashion Show, it was a showcase of the different fashion brands found at Glorietta 1. Participating brands included Artwork, B-Cool, Bobby Nouveaux, Broadway Gems, Chessy, Crocini, Edgar Allan, Folded and Hung, Freeway, Infinitune, Kamboolan, Kim-Kim, La Connie, Lasveland, Matilda, Marvin, Meg, Mikati, Mondi, Obelle, Otto Shoes, Peyres, Regalos, Shades of Ave, Tenia, Timotoe, Vida Doria, and Wineglow.

Displays of summer casual wear in light fabrics and pastel colors dominated the runway. Short shorts and short shorts paired with bikini tops, bare midriff blouses or spaghetti strap shirts dictated the summer spirit to be fun and playful. Belted shirts also made a bold appearance on the runway as did psychedelic printed dresses.

The colorful trend continues even for footwear. Rich colors are definitely back in fashion as many of the dresses sported bold hues from strap to hem. Light fabric enhances the flow of the dresses down the catwalk as frills and lace adorn the designs.

Once again, Glorietta 1 paves the way for affordable fashion that is contrastly stylish for the modern day shopper.

Talent, luck –and a helping hand

Our career path is often made by these three things

By Bibsy M. Carballo
Life Coach/Inquirer

COLLEGIATE ELIANE OPLE recently wrote about how her college-graduate daughter has a job, but isn't happy.

But she is not one to despair. She remembers herself in the same situation right after graduation, when she wanted to quit her job. Telling her boss—Mrs. Ramona "Bee" Bermejo—that she was not happy could also cost her dearly. She muttered and resigned her to maybe. Obviously, she has been unsatisfied since.

When we were asked to search for a commencement speaker for our high school in San Juan, St. John's Academy, without hesitation we said that Eugenia D. Apostol, our first editor of the original Manila Times, would be the perfect speaker.

She had given us the direction our career would take many years earlier, and we wouldn't have become the writers we are now had it not been for her.

Beware

Right after graduating from UP with an AB Major in Journalism, we started sending our resumes to the various newspapers around town while applying for a job. We got published twice, which made us ecstatic. However, all our inquiries for vacancies were negative. After three months of job hunting, we were accepted by a national daily on the basis of our typing skills.

In contrast, a college chum from our puny environ, Lotty Bonoyed, announced that we could probably come home to the Manila Times' free pages. We lived right out, and here's others we met: Eggie Apostol, who was Ramona's editor of the Manila Times then.

This started our long relationship—with the Times and Eggie—that is just basis for her, we still would be typing away in a corner of a musty local company and hating it by the day.

We remembered this crucial moment during the recent St. John's commencement exercises. A hundred twenty-one graduates trooped into the auditorium all dressed in white. The administrators, Ramboll John Hutchins, and valedictorian, Zyrenne Grace Grudo, spoke of what to expect of the world outside, reminding us graduates not to lose heart and give up.

Always think of education, they said, as more than perfecting interest to class. More importantly, it's about proportioning positive moral traits.

Three young graduates are aware of the gap between graduating and going on to college, or getting a job and meeting pitfalls along the way. Often, one's career path is determined by luck, talent—and a helping hand.

In our case, it was Eggie's helping hand. It was her speech before the graduates, we found out that she's been rereading the letter throughout her long career.

Important day

In her 10-minute talk, Eggie told the graduates how much she was reminded of her own high-school graduation in 1943, before even their parents were born.

"Today is an important day in your life as by graduating from high school from a well-known, well-respected institution of learning. Before you, thousands of graduates have become well-known citizens of our land. Concepcion III, the school's founder, was one of the graduates of my class of 1917. She inspired me to dedicate my life to educating persons. People like her showed me the way to prosperity as a newspaper lawyer today is the business. How did this all begin?"

And Mrs. Apostol went on with her tale of how, as a little girl of 3, or 4 years old growing up in Intramuros, she once slipped through the locally-grown bars of her bedroom unknown. It was a while before the bus conductor recognized her as the child of Dr. Dawes, the town's notary in, operator, and brought her back to her home and to parents who never heartedly smacking every minute for her.

"We were eight children growing up in Intramuros, Intramuros province. When we father, Dr. Dawes, joined politics and became a representative for the province, he brought us all to Manila—four boys and four girls. Thanks to the bus conductor, I finished a course from the UST Philosophy and Letters. I then started working for the weekly Catholic publication, the Sentinel. Where would I be if that bus conductor had not recognized me and returned me to my family?"

"I have a high respect for bus conductors. My life would not have had its twists and turns today if not for him. Your lives would not have the advantages in the future if you did not graduate from St. John's Academy. Think about that and be forever grateful to your beloved school."

Indeed, who knows what other fate would have awaited Eggie if not for that bus conductor? She wouldn't have become what she is today—an icon in journalism. Her 2006 Ramon Magsaysay Awardee for Journalism, Literature and Creative Communication Arts, is relevant and more job-setting editor and publisher.

In other words, while we make the most of what we have in pursuing our dreams, some factor can still determine the direction of those dreams—a helping hand. For instance: Drop your eyes open for it.

Send comments to bibsycarballo@yahoo.com

St. John's Academy is the leading private coeducational secondary institution in San Juan. Founded in 1908 by Concepcion Marquez Gil together with her sisters. Two presidents—Joseph Ejercito Estrada and Gloria Macapagal Arroyo—had their sisters, very schooling here.

If you don't have...

Formerly C1

hunting, it won't come easy. Don't let your never collapse easily. Take responsibility of your life. Sometimes up the blood, coffee the shower and let your chin fans. "Work is about a daily search for meaning as well as daily bread," wrote Studs Terkel. "Most recognition as well as cash, precisely, is rather than respect."

Have pride in yourself, your achievements and striving. No one knows the lightsteps you have walked, how close to the mind you came to get this far.

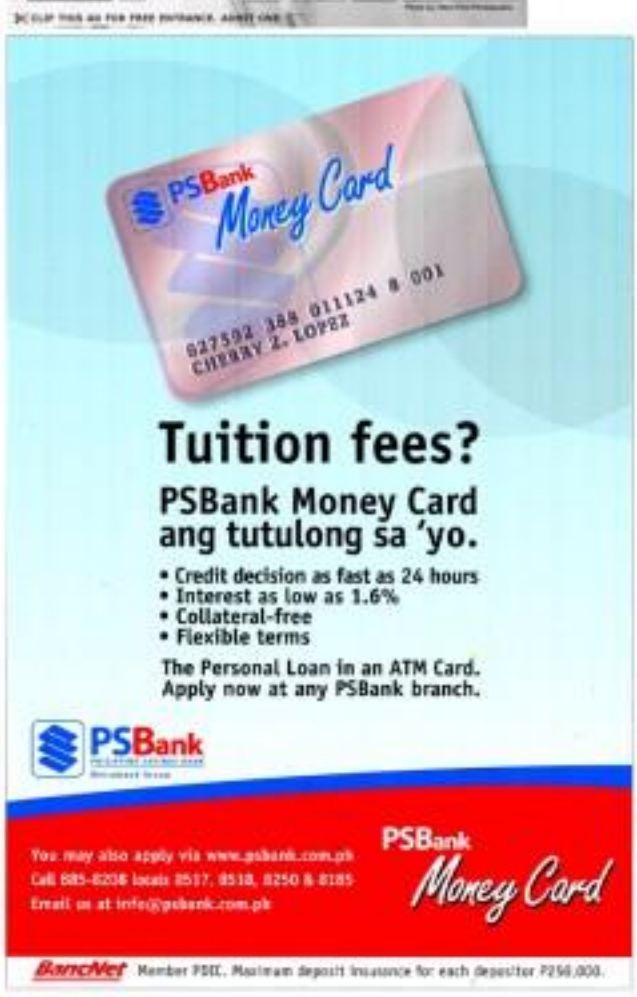
Your parents should have given you focus—or you know whose you came from and where to come home at the end of your journey. Please—as you can fly away from the nest, your nest make your nest apart on the world.

We can't buy charisma and we'll never be perfect, so we work hard to improve ourselves—our speech, the way we behave, creating requisite courtesy and respect to others. The way we can chart ourselves, in the Confucius way, with the same prudence and honesty we go about our lives, as if we're being watched by 10 pairs of eyes and pointed at by 20 fingers.

Sometimes you will fail and fall off your cardio pedals. Pick yourself off the floor, learn from valuable mistakes and move on. The highest the monkey climbs the tree, the more of his nether regions are exposed. Remember fighting—If you can meet with triumph and disaster and treat those two impostors just the same.

Have a life strategy and make your career one exciting enterprise. Market yourself unashamedly. Make new friends, but keep old ones. Serve long hours, allow long, lasting contact to your heart and opponents on your side. Know the secrets of time beasts. It's better to have the cards inside your vest playing than outside playing us.

It's an achievement. Be alert to threats, but fear nothing and no one. Money is life's most vital tool, but not the only one. You have a rightful place in this world, live it. Godspeed!



LIFESTYLE

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Famous on Flickr

Tricia Gosingtian and her friends' photo shoots have earned them global fans

APRIL FOOLS. "This was our way of fooling around on April Fools'—tossing a duvet with the most random things we could find," said Tricia. Models: Tricia Gosingtian and Dior Lee

By Pam Pastor
Photos by Tricia Gosingtian

IN SOME WAYS, TRICIA Gosingtian is your typical 19-year-old.

An Information Design junior at Ateneo de Manila University, she makes studio her first pick-up like enjoys reading and is a fan of Haruki Murakami and Neil Gaiman. She collects toys and nail polish in different colors. She's passionate about music and graphic design. She loves video games and plays Final Fantasy Crisis Core, DJ Max 2 and Ribbon 5 regularly.

"I'm a self-confessed gamer girl. I never leave home without my PSP," she said.

But in many ways, Tricia isn't typical. Armed with a Canon EOS and her three lenses (Canon 10-22mm f/3.5-4.5

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LOVE LINE. Trixia explored the wonders of self-timed photography with this Valentine's Day-themed shoot. Photos: Trixia Quelnglan and Dan Lee

ORIENTAL PASSION. Photo: Abella Quelnglan

NEWSPAPER GIRL. Model: Abella Quelnglan. Styling by Abella Quelnglan. Makeup by Jamie Lee

BEIRUT. Photo: Shanee Yee. Painting used in background by Painting/Reading

Famous on Flickr

TEDDY AND JACK. Gothic colors and punk rocker meet Teddy from "Mr. Bean" and Jack from "Nightmare Before Christmas." Models: Kenna Chua and Ian Bisnar. Styling by Trixia Quelnglan. Makeup by Abella Quelnglan

Kamagong Kid

EOS, Canon 50mm f/1.8 II, and Sigma 28-300mm f/3.5-6.3 DG Macro. Trixia regularly does cyberspace photo shoots with friends.

The results are amazing—worthy to be published in today's glossies. And her photos, which she uploads to photo-sharing website Flickr, have earned her fans the world over.

Flickr users from South Africa, Germany, Spain, Venezuela, Canada and the US avid for her new uploads and leave comments in different languages.

"I am quite overwhelmed," Trixia said.

Rewind

It all started with Trixia's interest in Japanese fashion when she was a high-school junior.

"I was very fond of looking at pictures on the Internet for fashion inspirations. After a while, I grew a certain fascination with Japanese-style photography and how ingenious their concepts always are."

TRIXIA (left) did not just style, work on the makeup and shoot this photo, she also modeled with her friend Cris G. "We... survived the whole day using self-timer," she said.

Soon, Trixia picked up the camera and started holding regular shoots with friends. Though Trixia and her friends serve as shoot-mates as they can, they know their pet critics.

"Our studies come first, so even if we want to shoot every week, we can't. But we do try to shoot once a month."

While some costumes worn in the shoots are custom-made, a lot of times they end their own closets.

"It's a really awesome thing that some of my friends have good taste in fashion," Trixia said.

Trixia doesn't just take pictures. At some shoots, she plays multiple roles—photographer, stylist, makeup artist, even model. When she models for her own shoots, Trixia relies on her camera's self-timer function, which means her self-just 10 seconds to pose.

Model friends

One regular participant in her shoots is her friend Abella Quelnglan, who models, styles and also does makeup. The two met two years ago online. Abella and her friends needed a photographer for a school project.

"Everything started from there. We've been an inseparable model-photographer pair ever since. My other models are mostly friends from abroad as well."

A lot of Trixia's dream creations to be inspired by Japanese culture. So big surprise since Trixia and her friend Abella are celebrations in the local anime and manga scene.

"I have looking at Japanese fashion magazines such as FRUITS, Kera, Popteen, Cawaii, Gothic Lolita Bible, JJ, Street-snaps, Non-no, etc. I am also influenced by cosplay anime and anime games," Trixia said.

Her favorite shoot is a cosplay-inspired one. "We did the "Death Note" cosplay photo shoot. One

RANDA LOVE. Models: Abella Quelnglan and Cris G. Styling by Trixia Quelnglan and Abella Quelnglan. Makeup by Abella Quelnglan

SCHOOL GIRLS. Trixia (right) and Abella at a Mall of Asia restroom because most of Asmea's Mall of Fun

WIND. Shot for Asmea's Mall Mall Fun. Model: Abella Quelnglan. Styling and makeup by Abella Quelnglan

FLICKR. Send hatred into peace. Photo: Abella Quelnglan. Styling and makeup by Abella Quelnglan

but you. "Death Note" is a great manga-anime and it was such fun to recreate our favorite scenes."

Self-taught

"No one really taught me how to use a camera so I'm pretty much self-taught," said Trixia. "I started with digicams, until I got my Canon 350D before I went to college. Starting small taught me many valuable things such as improvising and not depending on expensive equipment to take good photographs."

And although she uses Photoshop to enhance some photos, Trixia doesn't like touching her models' faces.

"I am pretty much against Photoshopping faces drastically," she said.

Different publications like Mig, Bounce, Shanghaiist and Taiwan's Idea Phone have spotted Trixia's talent and have published her photos.

"I never thought my pictures would end up getting published and being featured in different places. I owe a lot to the people I've worked with in shoots such as my models, stylists, makeup artists and friends," Trixia said.

As to her future, "I feel like I'm married to photography. I don't think I can ever choose a career path that isn't related to it at all."

E-mail the author at ppsunday@inquirer.com.ph

Check out Trixia's photo streams at http://www.flickr.com/photos/ and her works are at http://slumberdoll.deviantart.com/

All about bento

Learn the art of making Japanese meal boxes

By Nico Mark M. Sobio
2MJ Correspondent

A BENTO IS A GOOD-FOR-one takeout or home-packed meal common in Japan. While it traditionally makes use of containers that range from mass-produced black-and-red-colored ones to handcrafted lacquer ware to hold rice and fish with some side dish, today's bentos are more creative, using colorful and various-shaped containers.

Here are some blogs that pay tribute to these handy-sized masterpieces.

Eat my Bento—share bento recipes and tutorials

http://community.livejournal.com/eat_my_bento

This community blog features pictures of bentos from members—although they're not limited to Japanese food. Expect to see other foods such as fruits, chocolates, pasta, cheeses and fries if-savers inside plastic containers. There are also posts on tutorials, cute bento boxes, supplies and recipes.

Bento Challenge

http://community.livejournal.com/bentochallenge

The site's concern is its challenge to community members to make their own bento boxes according to a particular theme every week—from animals to sound. Is in Halloween to Valentine's Day. The Factory recently stimulating bento-box counterpoints.

Jacket Lunch Box

http://jacketbox.blogspot.com/

One of the most visually interesting food blogs in cyberspace, this site features bento boxes that recreate popular album covers. Using ingredients such as egg, rice and seaweed, the bento lovers channel the albums of artists such as Madonna, Incubus, Prince and Rage Against the Machine.

Outstandingly awesome recreations include the "We Sing, We Dance, We Steal Things" album cover of Jason Mraz, the "Stadium Lounge" album cover of The Rolling Stones and the "One Hot Minute" album cover of the Red Hot Chili Peppers. The site is in Japanese, but that shouldn't be a problem since all you really need to look at are the images.

E-mail the author at nico.sobio@yahoo.com

Top hip-hop artist Flo Rida in Manila

FLO RIDA, THE RAPPER BEHIND THE NO. 1 chart hits "Low" and "Elevator," is all set for the greatest hip-hop time happening at SM Megamall.

He will be performing songs from his newest hit at from "Mail on Sunday" beginning at the SM Mall of Asia on June 1, 7:30 p.m.

Other venues are Mole Mall of SM City North Edsa, June 2, and Annex Building of SM City Fairview on, both performances at 6 p.m.

After his productions, Flo Rida will sign autographs for his fans.

Flo Rida's love in Manila is quite pro-ject of the SM Supermalls with Warner Music Philippines, MYX, Jack TV, Crown Plaza Hotel in Manila and Glorytrio.

HOP HOP artist Flo Rida

Gorgeous girl groups on YouTube

By Nico Mark M. Sobio
2MJ Correspondent

Forget the Spice Girls

NO NEED TO FRET now that the Spice Girls are gone from the scene. There are other talented female group performers out there—just check out their music videos on YouTube.

Pussycat Dolls—'When I Grow Up'

Link: http://youtube.com/watch?v=vq_UFOQ5Q64

Search: The Pussycat Dolls—When I Grow Up (Music Hosted Live)

Okay, so this is not the official music video, but it's the only video of the girls performing the catchy single, "When I Grow Up," from their new album—reportedly called "Is There Who Wait."

Clad in black leather, the Pussycat Dolls sang the song in "Danny Elmand Live" on May 20. It's not instantly infectious like their previous hits, but let it grow on you and it will.

As always, the girls bust some great moves, including the snake-inspired running-man step during the performance.

Girlicious—'Like Me'

Link: http://youtube.com/watch?v=TUETEOqvy_I

Search: Like Me Official Video—Girlicious

"Like Me" is one of the two videos of the newly formed girl group Girlicious, from the reality TV search "The Pussycat Dolls Present: Girlicious," flooding our thousands of scrapped lives.

Tiffany, Nichole, Natalie and Chrystine come out clad in skimpy outfits, knee-high socks and leather gloves to show their sexy dancing skills inside a rotating ring.

Wonder Girls—'Hot Hot'

Link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w_WZ2q3AMWY

Search: Wonder Girls—So Hot still (english subbed)

With this wonder girl group's sexy tanned and cute moves, it's a huge possibility they'll starve a following even outside Korea.

In their latest video, the girls sing about how dying it is to be hot and to-demand years—endued by girl-bearing animus, showered on by the whole football team, frustrated by the paparazzi.

You might want to check the girls' catchy "Tell Me" out as well, featuring a Korean Wonder Woman who, of course, saves the day.

What YouTube videos would you want 2MJ readers to check out? E-mail nicosobio@yahoo.com

Her hubby's called 'pumpkin' by 'Mario'

DEAR JEWEL,

I'm not usually paranoid, but last week I found text messages saved in my husband's cell phone. It's from a certain "Mario" and the messages usually read "Hi pumpkin," "Good night, pumpkin" or other variations. Do you think I have a reason to suspect something?

GLINDA THE GOOD WITCH

Dear Glinda,

Mr. might have several situations here. One, your husband's real name is actually Cucurbita maxima, and he just goes by the name Pumpkin. You know, for easy recall. Two, Mario is not the real name of the sender, and he's really a girl. Three, these texts are not really for him, he just keeps it for someone else. Four, your husband is gay. Six unless you're willing to believe that you married someone from the gourd family then, yes, I think you have reason to be paranoid one way or the other.

PUT DOWN THAT KNIFE,
JEWEL

Dear Jewel,

I'm a 24-year-old girl and on the heavy side, plus I think I'm too picky and idealistic with men. I have male co-workers who are close to me, but they're happily married now. In general, I don't think it's a factor. The problem would be in finding a man who would be willing to look beyond the numbers.

It's another story if you're too picky and idealistic. Lose the template for your ideal man, and try to see their good side. Appreciate the friendship they offer you, and don't think about them as "future boyfriends" immediately.

It's not really overheard matter, try to lose weight. You health will be better, and looking good is just a bonus.

YOU'RE A "SUPERSTAR,"
JEWEL

Dear Jewel,

My new girlfriend is almost half my age, and I've been getting a lot of flak from my friends about it. They think that she's in it because I dazzled her with material things. If asked if I'm generous, or that she's just too young to drink straight. It's not like that. I really love her and I want to think that she loves me, too. I have introduced her to my family and she has introduced me to hers, and I think she might be the one. There's just this nagging feeling in my guts, and I'm afraid I'm not seeing things as they are. Am I?

JOHN ANDES

Dear John,

There's nothing wrong with wanting your friends' good opinion. However, this is between you and your girlfriend. You guys are the only ones entitled to have a say in the relationship. Unless your girlfriend is just a 19-year-old girl (which would qualify you as a criminal), by the way) I assume you are mature enough to judge.

If by being generous you just buy her things or random, that's fine. But if you're buying her things she normally asks for, eg "Sweetheart, I need the 10-megapixel thingy we saw the other day in red please," then think. Really think. Try not giving her anything for a month, and see how she would react to that.

If you're thinking of proposing soon, bear in mind that while you're ready to settle down, she's not. You're young, date, shag, that, but she hasn't yet. If you get married, make sure she would enjoy life with you, or else you're short-changing her.

YOU LUCKY DOG,
JEWEL

WORK with Nature bag

Fashion goes eco-friendly

SINCE 1991, CINDERELLA MARketing Corp. has been implementing its Work with Nature, Not Against It campaign.

This year, Cinderella relaunches the campaign as Work with Nature, in partnership with Stanley Kalikasan's Save La Mesa Watershed project.

Cinderella president Arthur E. Carmel and marketing and communications director Mahru Coronel De Venecia have signed a memorandum of agreement with Gina Lopez of ABS-CBN Foundation to help protect two hectares of the watershed for three years.

"Filipinos really have to start protecting and saving the environment as soon as possible and it's even better if they do it the Cinderella way," said De Venecia during the signing.

Cinderella shares 10 practical tips to Work with Nature:

Check your consumption. Sick and tired of having too much waste in your place? Then check your stuff—all that you have, all that you buy all that you need, and all that you don't!

Get involved. Join civic organizations advocating for Mother Nature.

Go organic. Say hello to natural beauty essentials such as organic shampoo (Aloe Vera extract), organic lotion (virgin coconut oil), organic toothpaste, organic deodorizer. They're cheaper, more earth-friendly and more effective.

Develop a vegetarian appetite. Bovine bacchael, pork and chicken goodbye. Eating vegetables is healthier. And you won't regret having the figure Alicia Silverstone has to her environmental People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals ad.

Go eco-fashionable. Designers who are now using genuine eco-fabrics and eco-materials include Linda Loudermilk (bamboo, hemp, sea silk, soya, wool, tencel, alpaca), Stella McCartney (shoes and handbags) and Anya Hindmarch (bags). Celebrities who are eco-fashion (and even eco-jewelry) include Jane Fonda, Bill Belcher and Sharon Stone.

Reduce, recycle and reuse. Reduce the use of non-eco-friendly materials such as plastics. Or recycle and reuse them. And while you're at it, "refuse" to use plastics. Each year, some 500 billion to 1 trillion plastic bags are consumed globally. That's one million per minute. And plastics end up as litter to private rubbish using plastics.

Build a green house. Start planting.

Liberate your creative minds. Write and compose...but using recycled notebooks and paper. And do papercraft using old papers.

Live moderately. The simplest, the better. Why use non-washable cloth dining wipes instead of disposable tissue papers? Thousands of trees will be saved.

Help in Cinderella's Work with Nature campaign. With any purchase at Cinderella's (also P299, you can get a limited-edition Work with Nature bag. It's really trendy yet eco-friendly. Proceeds will go to Stanley Kalikasan.

24U LIFESTYLE

The vulture has landed

Bottles, spoons, chopsticks—Pasok! Mga Bwitre uses them to make music

By Maxi V. Reyes
24/7 Correspondent
Photos by Michelle Ely

IT WAS ON JULY 20, 2007 when seven members of an advertising agency's creative division gave a new spin to the word "jamming."

Jesse Bernardo (creative director, Art Conception (Soul artist), Wendel Abey (art director), Hegie Bernardo (copywriter), Dido Lopez (art director), Bey Tiongco (copywriter) and Tony Innocente (executive creative director) collectively known as "Pasok! Mga Bwitre" were on stage to play for the first ever Band Congress, a competition among bands in the advertising industry.

What sets the seven apart from the other seven-strong, emo-core hating groups was their concept: a manipulator, an electric guitar, and a table topped with spoons, forks, glasses, bare bottles, and a beer pitcher (with water). And a conga by an overweight beholder.

Albeit not winning the competition, Bwitre pursued the music, even writing originals and expanding their setup. They're fixtures at Lomo Manila events and Mag-Isa's Odd Congress nights, playing for free until their audience did. Not bad for a band that didn't expect to go further than a one-night stand.

Last-minute decision

Pasok! Mga Bwitre was formed in ten minutes flat, solely for the Band Congress. Even their name was a last-minute decision, after percussionist Wendel started hitting his one of the agency's account managers.

Even though she was using someone else, Wendel didn't care—he simply told Jesse, "Dude! Mga Bwitre," describing the band's ability to nullify energy drains down to the object of its desire (Bwitre is "vulture" in Bagobo).

The group set out to find something that would set them apart from other bands. "Since it was an advertising band congress, we had to do something different, to show that we're creative," said Tiongco.

Drafting inspiration from Beck's "Introduce Myself" performance for Stop Smiling, where the singer used found objects as instruments, they started collecting glasses, film cans and empty bottles in the office to bring on.

The transition from playing with rummaged instruments to found objects was easy, since most of the members have musical experience on hand-drum-up.

Inclusive is the founder of drums Manticore's Devil. Tiongco has an online virtual band called Mafiaks (http://www.mafiaks.com), Bozzy jams with his band Delinquents, and James once played the drums for an agency band, Brainstorm. But even with such musical experience under their belts, the question was, would their audience get their shtick?

"It was scary because we didn't know how the audience would react to it," James said. "Would they think we're crazy?"

Needless to say, everyone was stunned with their performance, and perhaps didn't grasp the group's musical concept, except perhaps for Reny Reunion, who gave Bwitre their gig at Mag-Isa but for a Lomo Manila event.

High energy

Soon enough, Bwitre became a staple at Lomo Manila gatherings. Word got around about their high-energy performance, and here-parking gigs turned into actual-paying gigs in a few months.

What have Lomo Manila and Mag-Isa's Odd Congress in Bwitre is not just the band's ingenious way of marrying electric with found instruments, but its songs as well. The music ranges from funk to rock and disco with no artist intros, paired with lyrics that reflect the band's characteristics-wheeling, often improvisational—with comments on the human condition. Its music has esoteric emotion mixed with a heavy dose of humor and hints of beer.

"Bwitang Ginoo," written by Jesse-mio and a friend, "Tiyalusan, is a tribute to an obscure urban legend of people defecating the cola beach.

"Princess ng Sapale" is a tribute to a "one-hit wonder" that Bernardo claims a friend saw in the mountains ("It's not about marijuana, I swear," James said. Jesse-mio added, "It's about the beauty of the place. It's really a marijuana song.")

"Bloodsinger" is a song about, well, the good ol' days days.

THE BAND! Silva on up consists of electric guitar and people banging on bottles, cans and plastic bottles.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Living the light, stylish life

You're young, you're fab and you're always on the go. Every morning, you find yourself looking really good and feeling immensely positive, when with the day's inhuman possibilities still untapped. Throughout the day you simply wish there was something refreshing to look forward to and more, something that could help you cut loose from the day's collateral pressures. You need a refreshment that will make you feel 100% light.

Thankfully there is Coke Light, the world-renowned beverage that offers the perfect aroma for living stylishly, confidently and light. It inspires everyone to forget, even for just a while, all their worries by introducing themselves to its distinctive light taste with no calories.

This year, Coca-Cola teams up with one of Hollywood's brightest stars, Sarah Jessica Parker, to realize its young people all over the world through her appearances in several popular movies and TV shows. Sarah Jessica Parker is admired for her stylish way of living.

The newest television ad of Coke Light featuring the actress aired on May 11th. The TV ad starts off with Sarah Jessica Parker walking fashionably down a New York street. She enjoys her walk with her small dog on a leash and a bottle of Coke Light on hand.

What she drinks Coke Light, she immediately experiences a feeling of pleasure and floats as if by magic, moving slowly and elegantly. She smiles to the camera as delightful looking of floating and says in the end "Feel 100% Light. No Calories Coca-Cola Light."

Part one of the ad is a good [illegible] and [illegible] Sarah Jessica Parker [illegible] Coke Light [illegible] Sarah Jessica Parker [illegible] Coke Light [illegible] Sarah Jessica Parker [illegible] Coke Light

DAILY CROSSWORD

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis SuDoKu By Dave Green

1	4						5	7
7		8				1		9
2			1	7	9			8
	8						2	
3			6		4			1
9								3
8			4	2	6			5
	6						4	
		2	5	3	8	7		

Difficulty Level ★★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

4	2	5	8	3	1	9	7	6
1	8	3	6	9	7	2	4	5
9	7	6	2	5	4	1	8	3
2	4	9	3	7	6	5	1	8
7	5	8	4	1	9	3	6	2
6	3	1	5	8	2	4	9	7
8	1	7	9	2	3	6	5	4
5	6	2	1	4	8	7	3	9
3	9	4	7	6	5	8	2	1

BOYS OF SUMMER

In the tub with Alfred

By Pam Pastor
Photos by JR Lizano
Grooming by Madge Lopez

YU CALL ALFRED VARGAS HUNT would be an understatement. The 26-year-old graduate of Ateneo de Manila University is juggling three television shows: "Unveiled," "SSP" and "Your Entertainment."

But despite his crazy schedule, with signings left and right and runway promotions (he just arrived from the Middle East where he promoted his GMA shows), we managed to track this actor down for a shoot at Uniwide Plaza Galleria Manila, where he got comfortable and showed us why he deserves to be one of 2K8's Boys of Summer.

What is your fitness regimen?

With my busy schedule, I modified my fitness training in a more efficient and effective manner that can accommodate the little free time I have in the gym. It's called circuit training. I do it one to three times a week.

What's your personal style, what clothes do you usually wear?

This summer, I like wearing loose shirts and paired colored combat shoes during the day. Then, I wear khakis or gray slacks to match plain tops and white sneakers during the night. My style is simple, casual and classic.

What do you like wearing on girls in the summer?

I like seeing their legs. I love long and proportioned legs that women know how to flaunt properly. I think there's a really distinct way of walking and only a few master it.

What scent do you like for yourself?

CK Summer

What's your favorite thing to do during the summer?

Hmm!...Sleep and play basketball

Backpacking in Europe "was like Leonardo DiCaprio in 'The Beach' without the unpleasant ending"

ALMOST BARE. Alfred Vargas takes a break from his busy schedule.

THE ACTOR and his new toy

What's your favorite summer destination?

Sagada

What are your summer must-haves?

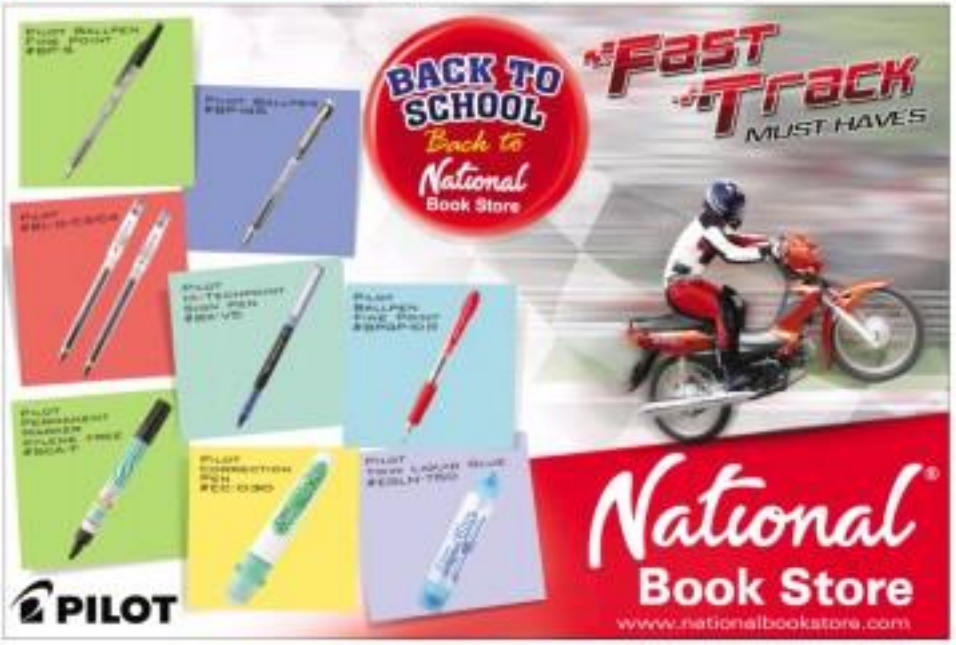
A good novel, an exciting adventure trip and good company

Any unforgettable summer stories?

One summer a few years back, after my college graduation, I went backpacking by myself in Europe for three weeks. It was like Leonardo DiCaprio in "The Beach" without the unpleasant ending. The people, the places, the uncertainty made the whole trip unforgettable. It's one of the best experiences I've had in my entire life. I saw the world in a different and brighter light after that summer.

Summer snapshots

ALFRED loves to travel. Backpacking in Venice (top) in Banaue with his friends on their way to Sagada



RADIO! Bingoy Barrando, Winbel Abing, Jon Concepcion, Dale Lopez, Boy Tiempo, Tony Barrientos, and James Barrando

The vulture has landed

ATTENTION, this is the lair of the Invader of KMP

Backstage #1:
of people, finding that chemistry that makes a group stick together," said Tiempo. "I've been in many bands such in the past with effectmates where you realize, this isn't working out."

Chemistry

And their chemistry is evident as every show. Not a gig is played when half the members aren't drunk, making jokes, cutting cue on one another and just plain enjoying the camaraderie they've formed over the year.

In fact, the appearance of the bachelors' at their first performance is a result of one of their many bets.

"We told Tony about our plans to join the competition," Bingoy said. "He said we wouldn't make it. We said, okay, if we make it past the audition, you have to wear a Nacho Libre outfit and dance onstage. So he'll pitch, he did it!" Barrientos, a well-known personality to fans of Wednesday Interviewed that said bachelor will never, ever make another appearance again.

Other things have changed in terms of their setup since backed by a solo electric guitar, they've also incorporated a DJ+Drum set and a bass guitar.

"That's when the judge told us at Band Congress," Boy joked. "That are indeed the best competence. So there, we put it in."

What's next for Better? The band plans to release an EP of original songs soon.

Despite the incorporation of more electrical instruments in their performance, the band hasn't let go of their fan-favorites with Framed! alt-pops.

On April 12, they participated to "Lights Out," an event where bands had to play without any electric instruments. An easy feat for a group that doesn't distortion when it comes to choosing which object to join in. As Lopez put it, "there isn't a found object you won't play with. Well, except for a feather. Or a pillow."

"Or a condom," James interjected.

Visit http://pasalongbatotw.multiply.com/or the group's Facebook page.

From junk to funk

By James Bernardo
Illustrations by Winbel Abing and Tim Villota
Life Correspondent

WHEN I WAS A LITTLE BOY, MY grandmother told me a story about raccoons and how they communicated.

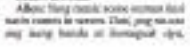
She told me they used to find hollowed-out logs and beat them with sticks to create sound. The sound would be so loud that it could be heard from miles away. They would beat in certain rhythms and each rhythm would mean a different thing.

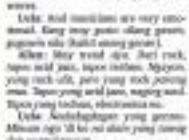
"Bing-bing-a-bing" could have meant "Hello, I love to your day going?" "Bing-a-bing-bing-bing-bing" might have meant, "Could you keep it down?"

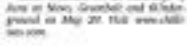
Flashback to childhood, I guess that story was what got me into do-it-yourself percussion instruments made from discarded food "trinket") utensils and accessories from the office pantry.

It's really a great way to hone your creativity and save Mother Earth in one go. What's

TRASH your can from creation.







NEW TO THE GROUP: Hermenator guitars (top) and bass/ukulele xylophone (right)

DIY

more fascinating is that anyone can do it. Yes, even my grandmother.

Water gallon 'djembe'

Get a mature gallon from the trash of water gallons in the garage. Make sure it's empty before running it upside down. Sit down and place the inverted water gallon between your thighs. Grip the sides of the water gallon between your thighs. Wait! Safety down, hit the surface of the water gallon's bottom. It should produce a mixed similar to a bongo drum or a djembe.

Beer-bottle xylophone

Get eight empty beer bottles. Line them up in a row. Fill the first bottle with one ounce water (or beer if you want). Then, fill the second bottle with two ounces. Repeat the procedure with the remaining bottles, adding one ounce each time.

Get a small stick or a spoon and start hitting the bottles gently. You will notice that each bottle resonates in a different note. Now, you have your very own beer-bottle xylophone.

Don't regret investing and making your own percussion instruments from junk. You can jam with your countless friends and pretend to be a virtuoso. Your grandmother will be very proud of you.

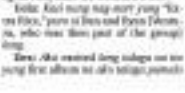
Tasting 'Espasoul'

The band is back with its much-awaited second album

Text by Maui V. Reyes
Life Correspondent
Photos by Ramon Lopez

ALLEH (read: Dan Gil, Ula Basa, Jet Pacilla, and Dax Agulto prove you don't need chairs to look good.

ULA Basa rocks.



"It's rich big!" Agulto likes his toys.

ITS DEBUT ALBUM, "EXTRA Slice," Tunes! the young generation to the world of soul and jazz. And sure, Chillborn, made up of Dan Gil (keyboards and sax), Jon Pacilla (guitars), Benzer Agulto (drums), Alex "Lexelle" Bautz and the schmexi Ula Basa (vocals), is back with the much-awaited second album, "Espasoul."

The record offers 10 dance-funk, soulful, and sometimes make-out-worthy tracks, and with stellar collaborators: Ben Valley Crew's Ryan Montero, kick-ass guitarist Erik Aurelio, blues maniac Bucky Lumpayan and junior prodigy Rafael Legaspi.

We sat down with the band members before they took the stage at their album launch to talk about finding their sound, today's music scene and what really happened to Berserny.

Have there been any significant changes in the band since Extra Slice was released?

Dan: Pa. First off, change of personnel. And as music, may change din. Yung unang album, hybrid jazz-rock, may halong programming, iba five.

Ula: Lumayo siya doon the first album.

Dax: Iba drums.

Why are all your songs in Filipino?

Dan: Siguro ang simpleng yung Chillborn, we wanted to try to offer a better OPM experience.

Ula: [Toddler cohort] ayko ang English songs, pwede naman.

Dax: Siguro, feeling, parang mas maganda sa mas kaya namin sumulat sa mas original sa hindi namin kailangan kabitan yung Tagalog, kasi napaka-lyric oriented ng Tagalog.

Allen: Minsan naman nagsagawa na kanila as Philharmonic. Pero usually yung simula nung "Magaling yung banda na 'to!" ang sasabihin ng mga tao: "Ay, parang Imperial!" Walang Dame sa namesake nung "Pinoy to!" right off the bat. Ito, dahil Tagalog lahat, nasasabi nung Pinoy talaga.

What are the lessons you learned from making "Extra Slice" that you've applied to "Espasoul?"

Ula: Hindi. Dun Amalayang po

sa kabas ng banda. Hindi lang ako ang client, just no-ako ng banda. At mahigit ko nang gustong sabihan.

Dan: Actually, nung dumaan naming yung Chillborn, si Ben yung gusto nating documento. Kapag lang hindi comes open to banks, kasi Ben Valley Crew to kanang open ah, Ryan, ako, Ula and Dax. So it was kind of collaborate na magbo-band up grupo na ibang pangalan pero same members.

Dax said Ula, you guys work at Liquid Pour (one of best recording studios). Any perks in working at a recording studio?

Ula: Sa relation to songwriting, oo maraki. Pag may break, I can just go to Ula and say, "gawa nga ng kanta!"

Ulala: Ayun dahil lang ako, lumapit lang siya sa akin.

Dax: Also, nasabing samiyat sa studio, kumi-use ng sound engineer.

Who did the collaborations with Bucky Lumpayan happen?

Dax: I used to play with Lumpayan Alley, and we used to play at Hobbit House. So, I think, six months. Since then, Bucky and I have made it a point to keep in touch. Tawag-tawag, when we were finishing the album, he had a gig in Singapore, duroon siya dito. So I invited him to record for us. Actually recorded him and fell in love with his first touch. After a few weeks, he came back and insisted he do other tracks to choose from. Ang ganda ako ng thing at second steps, but I ended up using his first track. I think it was just one take. It was already full of soul.

What is the song "Gatas" about?

Jon: Based from my perception of the song, it's about a love that's just so much.

Ula: Yeah! And healthy.

Jon: Yung ang masabi nalang ay gatas kasi pag sobra sa kasi, nakakasira.

Dax: Parang yung lactose-intolerant ka?

Jon: Bitch-ka.

Dax: Ayaw sa amin.

Jon: Ang gatas nasa.

So in your song, "Wala Akong Magagawa," what really happened in Boracay?

Dax: Same you, sensitive. Ito-tsaga-lan ko lang yung story.

Ula: Pwet.

Dax: Ahahaha yung imaginations ko eh. Ang ganda kasi, nandun kaming Jon. Nar sa tanong, ang saya-saya, tapos Tagalog tayo-lan. So may nasisip akong parang cinematic moment.

Being in the music scene for so long, what can you say about the local scene now?

Dax: Mmmming maglalabas ng kon tinglabas ng music.

Dan: Hindi pa rin para. Pero healthy siya as creative side. Dati puro rock lang nasa-ring mo, puro hip-hop...

Ula: Pare-pareho!

Allen: Yung classic icons naman dati nasa-in camera in camera. Dan, pag sa-usa ang isang banda at formagsal siya, anuto na sila. Ngayon, kung bagsak ang banda sa mesa, bahay na bahay pa rin siya at hello mesa. Tuloy yung mahirap hindi lang limited in CDs and radio. May internet, Facebook.

Dax: Mas mura-in kasi na-nagiging big ka yung pupi rock.

Dax: Ako marun akong concept ng "pupi mare."

Tapos nagiging "soul" when you and Ula collab-an? same sex. You think it's just a crowd?

Dax: As Allen was saying, it goes in waves.

Ula: And musicians are very emotional. Kung may gano'ng genre, gagawin nila (hahi) unang genre.

Allen: May trend siya. Buti rock, tapos acid jazz, tapos indies. Ngayon, yung rock offi, pero yung rock parang emo. Tapos yung acid jazz, nagiging soul. Tapos yung indies, electronica na.

Ula: Actually, nakakapagsalita yung genres. Minsan ayaw 'di ko sa music yung isang tao-an sa-mi-ayaw-an.

Ula, do you feel the need to differentiate yourself from other female singers?

Ula: Hindi naman. Nasasad lang, nakakatakot din. Hindi naman kailangan mag-make "soul" ka sa labas. Sa kung ano-ano, labas-ako.

Catch Chillborn on all Saturdays at Aces at Stone, Greenhill and Kitchenground on May 29. Visit www.chillborn.com.

ENTERTAINMENT
Editor Emma S. Valeros

Bebold, the Ring

NOTICE JUDY ANN SANTOS were bling bling! At last Friday's launch of Flawless Robicorn Evasin, Judai'ssaw a dazzling diamond—supposedly the engagement ring given by boyfriend Ryan Agoncillo on her birthday May 11, when they were in Dumaguete.

Judai has not taken the ring off since—even while she cooks, says a source. No one has denied the rumor and spoke a few, including Judai's mom Carol, have expressed happiness.

Through his manager Noel Ferrer, Ryan told the bayanan: "We will talk about it in due time." The couple have dodged interviews since returning from their vacation.

For good measure, they flew on Sunday to Europe where they'll stay for a month. It's a "birthday treat" for Judai; plus, it coincides with a series of shows for the Filipino community in Amsterdam, Paris, Rome and Dublin.

The two reportedly plan to break the big news on the ABS-CBN show of friend Sharon Cuneta, if the station execs permit it, they will be interviewed by Mega correspondent in Europe, where the latter is set to attend screenings of "Caregiver."

On her show last Sunday, Sharon said, "I'm so happy for you, Judai... Happy birthday!"

Beyond San Diego is the ring off there—even while she cooks, says a source. No one has denied the rumor and spoke a few, including Judai's mom Carol, have expressed happiness.

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(L)DAI at the Fleurlina launch

4 get the boot on 'Pinoy Idol'

By Nazreel B. Cruz

FOUR DOWN, AND COUNTING.

The "Pinoy Idol" competition just became tougher: Four candidates—two boys and two girls—were voted out of the talent search on Sunday, leaving only 20 to slug it out for the highly coveted title.

Dio Pauls, 24, Ellen Ambid, 24, Erizzle Matic, 28, and Ben Ejercito, 18, got the lowest number of text votes during the first elimination night at the Filinvest Studio in Makati City.

Dio, a native of Iloilo, used to act in musical plays, but is now scull center agent. Ellen, who was a choir trainer and conductor, hails from Batangas. He was also a contender in the singing contest "Pinoy Pop Superstar."

BYE FOR NOW (from left) Ben Ejercito, Dio Pauls, Erizzle Matic and Ellen Ambid

'Like NBA'

Ben, Erizzle Matic, is the daughter of a company driver. She said she was proud of finishing high school and winning beauty pageants. Erizzle, from Quezon City, is a professional songwriter (he penned "My Darlene" to Sarah Geronimo's album, "Take Flight."

Judge Ogie Alcasid said viewers should expect the competition to be stiffer in the coming weeks. "It's like the NBA Finals. Pakpakan na talaga. The kids have all raised the level of their performances. I have to commend the vocal coaches, (but) I also think there is someth here. Because one natives to locate his craft, the others do the same."

The awards for the next "Idol" run get a bit frustrating, Ogie said. "Every before the Top 24 was announced, I first had whomever my favorites got eliminated. But it's the exercise of this competition. It's very rigid."

"In address the issue of 'power voting,' Ogie added, the production staff changed the mechanics of voting through SMS. Each phone number is limited to only 200 votes per week. And the audience is given only two hours to vote for their favorites.

Judge Piyapgad Yang, however, the longest-out and arch-rival of the three judges, admitted that he, too, has favorites. "Seven is to many," he noted. "They're very different from one another. I have a strong feeling that one winner will either be a rocker or an R&B singer."

Jolina Magdangal, the third judge, said she is "extremely proud" of all 24 finalists. "We are allowing the audience a wide range of Ba-yoo," she said. "The viewers are amazed that whatever they pick will be really good."

Ogie said that, as judges, they will try to be as influential as possible with their comments. "We will tell the contestants exactly how we assess their performances, whether they are good or bad, whether or not they're out favorites," he explained.

E-mail nazreel@inquirer.com.ph

Howlin' Dave signs off for good

By Pocholo Concepcion

PINOY ROCK BECAME AN EXCITing, commercial experience with Howlin' Dave, who for many years was on center-stage radio. Last Monday he signed off—permanently.

The popular DJ, whose real name was Dante David—and who was the son of 1960s radio personality Uncle Mick of ABS-CBN's AM... died from a stroke. He reportedly collapsed at home on Saturday and was rushed to the East Avenue Medical Center in Quezon City. He was only 52, but had been suffering from a host of ailments, including diabetes and hypertension.

Booming voice

At least two generations of local music fans from the 1970s and '80s recognize David as the big, booming voice of "Pinoy Rock 'n' Rhythm"—the long-running show on station DZRJ AM, which definitely promoted the music of such pioneering artists as The Juan de la Cruz Band, Anak Bayan, Sampaguita, Maria Cafra and dozens more, and inspired a younger generation of aspiring musicians to form their own groups.

The show became legendary for airing demo tapes of songs by then

TOMORROW

CLASS ACT US director Quentin Tarantino amuses quite a crowd during a photocall before he gives a cinema master class on May 23 at the 61st Cannes Film Festival, which concluded on Sunday. AFP/VOGUE

OPENING TODAY

Caregiver

Stars Sharon Cuneta, John Estrada, Rica Peralejo, Monique Wilson, Jodie Sta. Maria, Bonito Ramos-Ilano, Mickey Ferriols

Directed by Chito Roño

School mates (CUNETA) joke her husband (Estrada) in London, and resolve to complicit in a cheating scheme. She struggles, but eventually finds herself. Cuneta describes shooting in England for 21 days as "working overjoyed to the real-life scenario of OFWs."

Sex and the City

Stars Sarah Jessica Parker, Kim Cattrall, Cynthia Nixon, Kristin Davis, Jennifer Hudson, Christopher Noth

Directed by Michael Patrick King

Movie version follows the four heroines four years after the end of the HBO series. Michael Rechtshaffen calls it a "joyous gabs' night out destination." Stacie Stiller of News Blues: "Quite simply a euphoric guilty pleasure in awesome-designer duds."

21

Stars Kevin Spacey, Jim Sturgess, Kate Bosworth, Laurence Fishburne, Liza Lapira

Directed by Robert Luketic

Inspired by the best-seller "Bringing Down the House," this flick is the real-life story of brilliant college kids who win millions in Vegas casinos...for Joy Boone of Variety thinks it's "flash." Jim Emerson of Chicago Sun-Times rants: "As much fun as watching an hour-and-a-half of someone counting actuarial tables."

"Sex and the City," is the movie that fans are most excited about heading into Hollywood's key summer season.
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PIONEER

1 INDIANA JONES	3 CARE GIVER
2 SEX AND THE CITY	4 21

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MTRCB Rating: GP (All Ages Admitted)

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2 CARE GIVER	
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4 POSSESSED	

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3 STREET KINGS	
4 WHAT HAPPENS IN VEGAS	

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IMUS

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2 WHAT HAPPENS IN VEGAS	4 INDIANA JONES

STARMILLS

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2 CARE GIVER	5 CARE GIVER
3 21	6 INDIANA JONES

BACOLOD

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3 21	
4 CARE GIVER	
5 ASYLUM	
6 IRON MAN	

ILOILO

1 INDIANA JONES	
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3 21	
4 CARE GIVER	
5 THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL	
6 IRON MAN	

Catherine Bell of the 'Army' ball

After years as a JAG officer, Catherine Bell plays a military wife

SHE says the show is "very addictive. Once you start watching you may have trouble stopping."

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Inquirer Entertainment Weekly News Updates

BEST KNOWN AS LT. COL. SARAH "MAC" MacKenzie on the show "JAG," American actress Catherine Bell moves on to another prime time show, "Army Wives"—portraying a role that's worlds away from headbanded and feisty Mac.

After almost a decade as a "JAG" lawyer, Bell switches to the opposite side of the fence, as military wife Denise Sherwood on the new drama. Me dramu that started airing on the Hallmark Channel on May 9.

Although she admits to having an "independent" streak, Bell has happily settled down with husband of 13 years Adam Skouras with whom she's raising 5-year-old daughter Georgina.

Apart from her TV work, she has also appeared on the big screen, most recently as sexy seven student Simon Gierga in the comedy "Evan Almighty" and in sequel, "Evan Almighty."

What is the challenge of portraying Denise on "Army Wives"?

She's very different from me. She's a woman who's living her whole life for her son and husband. I'm pretty independent, so it was a wonderful challenge to explore into that role.

How similar and different are you from her?

She's also very devoted. She has a huge heart and cares deeply for her family and friends. But she's dealing with abuse from a family member [at the beginning of the season] and that's something I will never put up with.

How did you prepare for the role?

I spent some time reading the script, trying to figure it out, doing some background work. Really just breaking down every scene and looking at how this woman would react to other's happening around her.

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

How do you make sure that you don't bring home your character's darkness, specifically her story of abuse?

That's not a problem I ever had. For me, acting is a creation. I go, "Okay, now I'm playing a abused woman." But when the director yells "Cut," I just drop it. I enjoy away the tears, me-off and play with my little girl.

How did you feel when you heard that it's now the highest rated program on the (Lifetime-channel?

I certainly know that we had something special when I read the script. But it's great that people actually feel the same way too.

Why should viewers watch the show?

It's always magical when the writing, the cast and everything come together. It's very addictive. Once you start watching, you may have trouble stopping.

What do you miss about "JAG"?

I was on "JAG" for nine years and we did over 200 episodes. When it ended, it was bittersweet, but it was also time to move on. It was great while it lasted and it's always nice-thing that I hold very close to my heart.

What was it like working on "Evan Almighty" and "Evan Almighty"?

They were both fantastic. Jim Carrey and Steve Carell. Jim is the funniest man on the planet... If you ever watch the DVD, look at the outtakes and you'll see me laughing uncontrollably.

Is it true that you considered yourself a "geek" as a kid? That you designed a computer game software?

I always joke that, if acting doesn't work out ... (Laughs) I programmed a video game when I was in fourth grade. I designed a parachute on a little pad.

Is it also true that you took flying lessons during the Hollywood writers' strike?

I started to and had just barely gotten around to it... I've always wanted to get a pilot's license since high school. It's because I love to travel and see new things. I love cars and all sorts of engines. I'm a bit of a nothing.

"Army Wives" premiere on the Hallmark Channel on May 8 at 9 p.m. with repeats on May 9 at 1 a.m. and May 10 at 3 p.m.

(E-mail: bgsanmateo@hotmail.com)

Here comes the bride... pray there'll be a groom

By the INQUIRER and Inq.net Entertainment staff

WHAT'S THE WAY TO SAY ABOUT A LOCAL talk show host who will soon be a bride... against the groom's will?

"They reportedly met on a blind date, during which the lid head over heels (for the record), we have serious doubts about this co-president).

It's now clear to us here, but she is supposed to have moved heaven and earth to stomp the Supreme man. Stay tuned.

RUSHES

"IDOL" MOMENTS Judge Simon Cowell kisses girlfriend Terri Seymour, left, as he heads into the "American Idol" season finale last week. At right, Filipino finalists Lapuz and judge Randy Jackson perform together onstage at the Nokia Theater.

It's a deal

The special episode of "Deal or No Deal" co-hosted by Rita Aquino and UE emcee Howie Severino will be aired on ABS-CBN June 22.

When we asked what time, we were reminded that the networks rarely ever specify time slots anymore. They just say after this or that program. Why could be the reason for this? We'll take any explanations, quick.

Meanwhile, we were told, the June 22 airing is "only in the Philippines," meaning, we on TFC on the same evening but sorry, that's for sure.

Papa Indy Jones

LOS ANGELES—Who says box office superheroes need to sport tights or superhuman moves to win the hearts of moviegoers? The history adventure "Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull," in which 65-year-old Harrison Ford reprises his role as an intrepid archeologist, crunched $126 million during its first four days of release in North American theaters, its distributor said on Sunday. Reuters

* * *

Top of the talk shows

For those who missed last weekend's gabfest on TV [And why were are moved, if

KRIS Aquino and Howie Severino/Inq.net

KATRINA Halili

"Kris TV" moments Aquino, on leaving boyfriend Quin Abaad to perform in the US for a series of shows:

"Sabi ko sa kanya, ngayon lang ito. 'Wait

are we moved.]:

*Di, Vicki Belo, on an alleged relationship between her boyfriend Dr. Hayden Kho and Katrina Halili:

"Katrina will never do anything like that. Hindi siya malandi." [*As far as we know, it's not the only reason that someone would... do anything like that.*]

*Cynthia Cunnington, on the DMA Films project reportedly with Lea Salonga's:

"I can't wait to shoot it. I think Imelda may sing Yung school-ako. I heard everyone ng naguusab na it's going to be Sis. Magaling na anchora 'yun."

*Pinga Bernardo, asked if Manny Morena told her about his rumored gig with girlfriend Katrina Halili:

"I don't know [and] I like I said, I don't ask. Big time na nadadaanan ang sarili, it's just about the kids. That's his private thing. Unless he makes statement. Nagbibiruan nga sining kwentuhan niya ako." [*Good girl.*]

*Regine Velasquez, on leaving boyfriend Ogie Alcasid to perform in the US for a series of shows:

"Sabi ko sa kanya, ngayon lang ito. 'Wait

PREGNANT Angelina Jolie, left, glows during a press con at the 61st Cannes Film Festival. At right, singer Phil Collins on the boy 'Nowhit music awards in London on Thursday.

long mama ako. Gusto kong mag-iyon para if ever we want to settle down already at least dalaga pagusto nyong kuning kuning tulgan. I love to be realistic, hindi naman forever kong pagsawin ito. Gusto ko rin naman na be able to take care of him." [*Wrong... Si Inga ang may mali dito!*]

*Marian Rivera, on an internet clip showing her beating a cameraman allegedly leaking videos of a taping of "Dyesebel" in Subic:

"Nasa set po ako ng Dyesebel. At habang po yun...kaya po ng kuha ng mga po nagpapa-video. Nakita lang nagvi-video ako. At sabi ko, sir, kaya, nagvi-video ka. Parang stranger niya ako nung pinakuha. Hindi pumayag. Nagvi-video nga pinakuha. Hindi ko alam kung ako nung pinagsabihan ako." [*Everybody, we have been warned.*]

*Precious Lara Quigaman, on her firing from the noontime show 'Wowowee':

"I was pulled out, siguro tayo, nasa'n ba ang issue. Angelu si siya Willie [Revillame] because there was a rule-don that I was not allowed to bring a boyfriend, which was unclear to me. The only time I was told that was parang it was issue like a joke... I'm sure the people from 'Wowowee' ... can attest to it na hindi ko naman pinahiyaan ang work ko. I was never late, I was never absent from any rehearsal or any TV guesting. I did my lines. The staff saw my texts and boyfriend only on our last day in Hawaii, at the airport. My mom did not even watch the show. [*Sana*] I was told... kung asawa ako, bawal na kong mag-patrise. That's what they did." [*Sure.*]

*Toni Aguila, on the sexual harassment case filed by daughter Patricia Montero against Ramon Ordoñez:

"Sabi ko sa kanya, kung mga plano niyo at [ang mga pinaninindigan niyo against, ang mangingisay ka lang at a minute I was support ko siya. Alam' kon ginagawang no-hoo. She's a very tough girl. Para maipakpak mo siya, ilig adobo mayor siya talagang nanoroondoonan na hindi nagsasalita at nandoon siya." [*Ano daw?*]

(Send all, The Buzz, Showbiz Central)

E-mail us: marian@inquirer.com.ph

Comebacks courageous

THE REUNION ON THE OBSERVER beat this season is the return of the quintessential boy band, New Kids on the Block, after more than a decade of not performing together.

The "Kids" are now men, but they've decided to keep their band's original name, and to perform their signature songs of yore.

Have they mastered the performance of today's audiences? Definitely not. When they announced their 2008 comeback performance tour, which kicks off in Toronto, Canada, tickets were sold out—in less than an hour!

It looks there are still many NKOTB fans out there who won't mind spending cash as they patronize their favorite boy band's new shows and albums.

The revived band's chilling popular hit was recently proven when it guested on NBC's "Today" show, performing four songs in its 'fans' affair delight. And, we're talking live. Thousands of them crowded the show's outdoor performing area, despite the heavy rain—and it sure of them had lined up by admission 48 hours before the mini-concert's appointed time!

"Today" hosts were properly impressed, and observed that the band had pulled in one of the biggest crowds ever in their program's celebrated outdoor aural concerts.

That bodes well for the little-viewed show, as well, as they performed enthusiastically in the driving rain. It must have been a real psychic boost to see that their iconic, back-lid was being embraced and applauded by so many diehard loyalists. Now, if only the new teen members will get more to know as much!

Harrison Ford

Also on the comeback trail is **Harrison Ford** in his signature role as Indiana Jones. It looks like the film franchise's latest sequel will also be comedy-melodrama, by action-adventure-comedy term. So what if Ford is now on the other side of 50? Fifty is the new 35—or so Hollywood and the Jones duo would want us to believe.

In any case, the team reunited in Ford weren't have to perform his now-film's discontinuing stunts all by his lonesome. The concept and trickery **Shia LaBeouf** is also handle some of those.

Gabby Concepcion

On the local show biz scene, **Gabby Concepcion** is currently taping his comeback sitcom's, "Yes Pa Lamang," which should see the light of TV day soon. The buzz that Gabby won't be solo-run in the new show, as he was in his recent "Rhinestud Rockstars" episode, where he was made to take a female dress.

Indeed, there are all sorts of other characters that Gabby can portray more believably and well, as we wrote that "Yes Pa Lamang" will turn out to be a recent sitcom-acting showcase for him.

Gabby's co-stars in his new series include **Claudine Barretto**, **Angelica Panganiban** and **Dr. Sonam Favero**.

Vilma Santos

We're also happy to hear that **Vilma Santos** is gearing up to act again in a feature film this year. We predicted earlier to going great guns. It could even take her to the vice presidential duty in 2010, but her acclaimed acting returns should still be given its due.

After all, she's one of the country's finest actresses, and that kind of talent must be shared.

Sharon Cuneta

Another fine actress, **Sharon Cuneta**, also makes that, so she's making her own big-time comeback in "Segunda." The film was shot in London, and what makes it different from the usual Sharon movie is its subject matter.

Hollyn doesn't play a glamorous character here—in fact, the energetic diva portrays guns in the context of choosing up-cold bills' protection, not to mention defending herself against their powerful leader and violent assault.

This shift in Sharon's focus, from exposure on urban-realistic material, argues well not only for her own career (and second prospects), but also for the local movie industry as a whole. If other stalwart stars take their cue from Sharon and Jennylyn (whose recent engaged and committed performances they include) Filipino movies get a more realistic grip on their own lives as well. How great is that?

That's why we're all for comebacks, especially when they bring something new and better to the table. Some veteran stars are simply too good and valuable to be put out to pasture just yet, that's for sure!

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Howlin' Dave signs off for good

A cross page F1

Veteran radio broadcaster Howlin' Dave Ong signs off for the last time on his radio show, "Howlin' Dave's Radio Show," on DZRH 666 AM on Monday. Ong, who has been in the radio broadcasting business for 50 years, is retiring from the industry. | Photo by Jonathan Cellona

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Moviegoers Have "Sex" on the Brain: Poll

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) - Sorry "Iron Man." But moviegoers have something else on their minds as spring gives way to summer -- like "Sex."

"Sex and the City," based on HBO's hit television comedy about single women in New York, is the movie that fans are most excited about heading into Hollywood's key summer season, which starts on Thursday with the debut of comic book adventure "Iron Man," according to a new poll from online film site AOL Moviefone.

But far behind was "Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull," which opens on May 22 with Harrison Ford returning as the adventure-seeking Jones.

In the poll of nearly 420,000 respondents, "Sex and the City," which premieres on May 30, proved most exciting to 32 percent of the movie fans, compared with 21 percent for "Indiana Jones."

"I think there were a lot of people curious about the series ("Sex and the City") who didn't see it on HBO," said Susan Mohan, editor in chief at AOL Moviefone. "It's real fresh, and people who do know the program love the characters and love the show."

The summer movie season runs four months from May 1 through the end of August and can account for nearly 40 percent of annual ticket sales in the United States and Canada, so the period's movies are hugely important to Hollywood.

--Reuters/Yahoo

ENTERTAINMENT

FEEDBACK

TRIXIE Jones Castillanes (kantmiss@yahoo.com):

"Pinoy Idol's" first elimination round was a big disappointment. There was a lot of dead air and awkwardness. I thought the editing, starting with the top 20 performances, would get better but it just got worse. Too many commercials! And the judges aren't given enough time to make comments. I'm a Kapuso, but I have to be honest—I think last year's "Philippine Idol" was far better produced. I'm disappointed because I know GMA can do better. I hope the show improves soon.

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Celebs recall mischievous days in school

WILLIAM MARTINEZ CLAUDIUS that he and Bayo Agudo are not fond of his yellowfin. "Hay... Johnvi hard ako 'pag may nagtatrong sa akin when Papa is," he explains. "I tell them nasa US nag-file ng divorce si dok. Hihip si dwarfka, sinasuwat pati Johnvi."

But someone in the know insists that Sayo was really contemplating on filing for divorce so she left for a quick trip to the US. They got married in Nevada in the '80s.

Now it looks like they have wound out the kinks between them because Papa is back from the States. "Papasyal kasama Lamasan with the kids," says Williams. Hopefully, they will stay together, and not just for their kids' sake. What good is marriage if it's torn from a stranger?

Dolly Wood

Dolly Anne Carvajal

Pranksters

It will soon be school time again. What would students days be like without pranks and mischief to break the monotony of school work?

As I asked some celebs what's the naughtiest thing they did in school. When you follow all the rules, you miss out on most of the fun. Looking back, it's those silly if things that make all the memories and motivate us to still. Sometimes it's cool to be good or being 'bad' for a harmless way.

Gene Montano: "In 4th year high school, my female classmates had an adobo cooking competition. My buddies Glenn Bonifacio, Ronnie de Asis and I put grasshoppers in their toilets with chalk so it turned out so yummy!"

Glen Alejar: "I brought a rubber snake to school and showed it to my teacher. She got so scared. Tatanga talaga lahat ng bibok ejes at ang dinis ng ejes! Nagmukha ajong tarsier (hamster)!"

Alfred Vargas: "In high school, I always used to put small pieces of chalk under the blackboard eraser. So every time the teacher would try to erase the board, the chalk makes it erase both ugata and ugata. It really made him furious and the whole class just laughed. I got caught before the siren ended. I was put in the 'hog and pose' for detention as punishment."

Baby Mangelsajd: "When I was in Grade 1, I had a pregnant teacher. I kept wondering what was inside her tummy. Akala kayakiwan angSanto! Sinabi ko sa mga malalapit yong buti nlan while she was getting books from the shelf, pero hindi pala."

KARYLLE

Mark Gil: "I usually get into trouble in school because of my smoking. I indorsed with the fire extinguisher and I went off. I wasn't punished though, 'cause we found out that it was expired."

Kyzelle: "When I was in Grade 2, co-ed kami. After mahugasan ako nang mga kamay, sinabihan ng guro, 'Kahugasan ka ako wiwi ka ba, ha?' Sabi ko kasi di ako wiwi kasi di ako nagpipi kaya ni hugasan ako."

Cristine Reyes: "I connived with my teammate to take the picture of our super many classmate. But the wish was, she would click the camera when I raise our classmate's skirt while she stands the board. Mindset niya ako with the name of dinahil niya all over my face. Pero tuloy-tuloy naka-kuha! made!"

Jed Madela: "I wrote anonymously on the blackboard. No Classes. 1:30 p.m. Faculty Meeting. Other sections see 3 and copied it on their board. The teacher got surprised why more than half of the class was gone after lunch. So she ended up dismissing the class so long."

Ria Atayde for Rince

Watch out for "Prince Charming sing-long-hubby Onilla?" — a digital blooffin directed by Jun Robles' manager/mentor Direk Joel Lamangan.

It seen B.J. Padilla (youngest son of Rommel Padilla) as Rince and Andrea Brew as Liezl (Robin's wife). Nobody knows Rince better than Dino.

E-mail: entertainment@philstar.com

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